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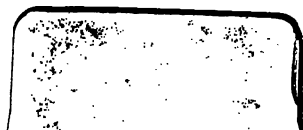
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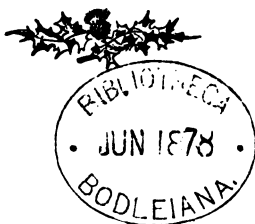
BURNS IN DRAMA

TOGETHER WITH

SAVED LEAVES

EDITED BY

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING



EDINBURGH

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1878

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N O T E.

THE *Saved Leaves* (it is the Author speaks) are as they name themselves—saved leaves. There is a literary flush in most impressionable young students, from sixteen to twenty-three or so—of such flush these leaves are saved specimens. What is said of the *Ballad of Merla* will, with the dates, sufficiently *orient* the reader; who, *du reste*,—so far as the collecting is concerned,—will, perhaps, think of an occupation of recess.

It is different with *Burns in Drama*; which, nevertheless, was itself planned, begun, and in large part written in 1855. It is scarcely necessary to remark that, by this piece, no drama of plot or incident is intended, but only a study of character. With this object in view, the matter of concluding (partial) monologues was found unfit for the form of dialogue.

The judicious reader will, probably, perceive that some part of the ‘saving’ element was consideration of the variety of tastes.



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BURNS IN DRAMA.

ACT I.

THE NATURAL JET—AWAKENING YOUTH.

SCENE I.

Mount Oliphant—Saturday Night—Burns' Seventeenth Year.

WILLIAM BURNES. Hawkie dead ! Just one thing after another—evil upon evil—cross upon cross—and that hard-hearted man, the Factor—

[*Enter the FACTOR.*]

MRS. BURNES (*with a start*). Gude be wi' us ! Speak o' the deil—

FACTOR. Speak o' something nearer hame, mistress, and mair to the purpose.—Are ye a' gyte ? Ye glower as if ye saw a warlock.

W. BURNES. You have certainly taken us by surprise, sir ; but come to the fire, and seat yourself.

FACTOR. I doubt it's no worth whyle sitting, for I daur say your answer is no very pat to this bit paper.

W. BURNES. The arrears again !

FACTOR. Just that same ; and no ony shorter, you'll see.

W. BURNES. I see it, sir—I know it well. But what can I say ? I fear my answer must get shorter : I cannot pay.

FACTOR. But that answer I canna ony langer tak, William Burnes : I must have the money.

MRS. BURNES. But listen, sir! Surely it's no the bread o' idleness that's eaten in this house; surely it's neither what we put in us, nor what we put on us, that keeps us in your debt. We sleep little, and we work meikle. We strive and we strain; we hain and we kain; and we scrimp ourselves o' the very necessars o' life that we may be burthenless and blameless before God and before man. Oh, sir, sir, we mean to pay you, and we will pay you. Gie us but time. Surely, surely, we do the best we can.

FACTOR. It's no for me, mistress, to say what you dae or what ye dinna dae: I'm just here to get what's awin.

MRS. BURNES. But you ken yoursel how things have gone against us—you ken yoursel what kind o' seasons—

W. BURNES. Agnes, Agnes, it is no use speaking—all has been said: I am wearied o' words, and money I have not.

FACTOR. But money you must have—money I'll mak you have, or there's no a spoon in your haun, nor a luggie on your table but 'll gang to answer for't.

MRS. BURNES. We have lost crops—we have lost cattle. This very day, Hawkie, the best o' the hale byre, is dead. From first to last it's been a bad bargain.

FACTOR. And wha made ye tak the bargain?—were you forced to it?—was it no your ain doing? And what business had a *gardener* wi' a farm at all? I suppose naething less would serve him than makin' lairds o' his sons, and leddies o' his dochters.

W. BURNES. You are not likely to understand my motives, so—

FACTOR. O ay! you are a great gentleman, are you? You could run into debt, though, and egg ithers to run into debt, and a' to get tutors, and teachers, and schoolmasters for your twa coofs there. It's a' edication, edication—books, books—writing-masters at Dalrymple, and French anes at Ayr, and honest folk canna get their ain aff ye.

W. BURNES. Go on, sir, go on! I despise your meanness, and can keep my temper.

FACTOR. What business had a gardener body to tak a farm at all, I ask? But I maun humbly beg your pardon; it's no a gardener we maun ca' ye, but a great man in dis-

guise, a great man frae the north, that keepit a sword ance, the Lord preserve us! and gaed oot wi't.

W. BURNESSE (*rising*). Sir, sir, sir!

MRS. BURNESSE. Dinna heed him, William: he's just wanting to anger ye.

W. BURNESSE. Just so! Well, sir, well? O, I can still listen.

FACTOR. Listen and pay, listen and pay. What have I to do with your losses and crosses, your bad seed, and your wat harvests, your age and your aches, your granes and your pains? It's what you deserve: it set you weel, an auld man like you, to marry a young wife, and bring a smytie o' brats into the world ye canna provide for.

W. BURNESSE. Man! will ye have done? It's hard, but if we receive good—I tell ye, man, I will work these old bones bare, I will deny this old frame all—And these young things, we will wring, with the blessing of God, we will wring your money out of our thews for you. If that content you, go—take yourself from our sight. If not, then you must even do your worst. I am old, and I am spent, and I have those that need me, but I stoop no more to beg your mercy—I trust in Him who has heed even of the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field.

FACTOR. Oh, man, your airs o' resignation but mak me sick, and a' your canting but hardens me: you're just a d—d auld hypocrite, and if you don't pay, by——! I'll——

BURNS (*who suffering from headache, has been holding his head, now springing up and seizing Factor*). Silence, sir, silence! Another word from out your mouth, and I'll send your pitiful soul straight to the father o't.

FACTOR (*struggling*). Tak aff your hands, let me alane—let me alane, I say!

BURNS. No, by the Lord! I'll grip ye harder. Must we listen to such language? Did ye think I could sit thowless by and hear my father insulted and bespittled by such a slaving wretch as you? Get out of this—out with you! Out, you mean low cent-per-cent rascal you, you paper-pens-and-ink naething—out with you, or by the saul of David I'll throttle you on the door-step. (*Flings Factor out and shuts the door.*)

FACTOR (*at door*). Rook and stook, thack and rape, ye

draff! Rook and stook, ye penniless beggars! Look for me the morn.

BURNS (*opening door*). The morn's the Sabbath, you gowk! Will ye hornin and caption on the Lord's Day, you ass of a fox? (*Shuts door.*)

[W. BURNES has buried his face in his hands, the children cry, and Mrs. BURNES endeavours to appease them.]

W. BURNES (*after a pause*). It is well, Robert; but he to whom the flames of God are given must not let them rive after their own fashion: he must control—hold them, and have them. It's done and cannot be undone, and things very likely, after all, are not worse than they were. But I suppose we have all had supper enough. Agnes, bring the books. We will seek that refuge which cannot be denied even to the most miserable—the captive and the prisoner.

SCENE 2.

Irvine—Eglinton Woods—An Autumn Sunday—Burns on a Rustic Bridge, trees climbing up on the right behind him, and a small clump a little to the left before him—Tops of Castle, show left, over trees.

BURNS. Ha! 'twas a good joke, and what a laugh it made. What a devil they must think me—worse than any bleezed old rake among them. And yet—if they but knew—the blate blockhead that I am—and I am twenty-two! And Ellison has rejected me!—I suppose I could not play the man enough, and force her into an adoring servitude—carried off her feet! I wonder now if that was love I felt for her, or calf-love—calf-love, and awful respect before the air she had? The lasses daunt on me. Ah! if I could but be upsides with them for that mortification—pshaw! the half of it was play-acting.

How peacefully the water flows, a gleaming glide—a gliding gleam! How clear the concave of the sky within, and how the trees point up, and up, around it. 'Tis the eye of beauty. Ha! it glammers me—it reels—my head turns—I must look elsewhere. Noble that high tower, those windows o'er the trees: ah! were all that mine! I'd leap to Egypt! Greece, and Rome, and Palestine.—Oh!—

damn the nail ! Why did I wave my arm in that way, the dooms idiot that I was ! My Sunday coat, too ! Ye rusted uselessness, and ye maun preach to me. I needna dream—I am but a heckler—my father a pair auld gardener—and I had neither shoon to my feet, nor hap to my head—just as my brothers and sisters are at this very moment ! Queer, that a bit rusty nail should be set there to tell me a' that. But, frien', do ye no ken I can rhyme and mak verses—O, "I dreamed I lay," and "My Nannie, O," etc., etc., etc. ! But it's true what you say for all that—I am nothing, and can be nothing. Work and drudgery, poverty and obscurity, care and anxiety, hanker and canker—that's the life that lies before me. I have learned something, but better I were a clod, and never felt. My stomach is as proud as Lucifer's, and—I am the most abject of wretches, a skulking eye-sore on the streets, that would fain be out of sight.

How the wind rises—there must be a storm brewing ! It has fallen dark all around—listen ! There is the roar of battle in the trees behind : it waxes louder, louder, nearer, nearer, and the attacked are driven this way—hark what a howl ! And, see, the small clump in front there shudders—shudders, shrieks, wails : 'tis the women, the children, and the aged. Ha ! the shudder and the shriek have ceased—the tide of war has rolled the other way again—how the sound grows distant and more distant, faint and fainter !—Again, again !—they come again !—the fight redoubles ! Nearer, nearer !—no stop, no stay !—the enemy is amongst them !—in the camp—amid the women ! 'Tis general massacre, with the shriek, the howl, and din of murder. But [*it thunders*] here comes a mightier yet, to quash, and quell, and overawe the pigmies—what silence of expectant fear ! But now the hurricane, the lightning-eyed and thunder-winged demon of the storm, is over all.—Ha, ha ! he's down upon us ! The trees convulse themselves in panic, and tear themselves for flight, and lash themselves, and howl, and desperate give up, and turn, and shiver—white.—
And I shiver ; the idiot that I am, I am wet to the skin.
(*Runs off.*)

ACT II.

OPENING MANHOOD : YOUNG BLOOD, YOUNG FEELINGS,
YOUNG BITTERNESS.

SCENE I.

Mauchline Race—Neighbourhood of the Course.

BURNS. They look like cats, but they run weel, and I dare say win meikle, or tyne meikle—But what have I to do with them or theirs? I have neither scot nor lot in one thing or another here. Man, the pismire, ‘plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven as make the angels weep’—or laugh! What a yatter, and a blatter, and a stir—what a churm that Grand Stand is! What excited thravin’ o’ heads, and affected liftin’ o’ chins, and carried-awa boos—the very pink of perfection—o’ gomeril monkeys o’ men to gomeril monkeys o’ women, a’ gane aff at the head, and mincing what they think a langage o’ the gods! Od, but it’s a funny thing, the hale o’t! What a life they hae—what things they live for: Operas, and hells, and drawing-rooms, and becks, and grins—and empty sowls, by G—!—Ou ay, Robin, Robin, you’re a peg owre low this mornin’—what ails ye, man?

[THE LAIRD OF COILSFIELD *passing, says*, ‘Good morning, Mr. Burness!’]

Good morning, sir! It’s Coilsfield—a fine fellow! Well, I don’t know if the maist o’ them’s that bad after a’—ony waur than oursels. They’re fine, frank, throutther, furthy fellows, a heap o’ them! Keep aff their muir-cocks, and—a’ the ither corns o’ that, as they really believe, superfine flesh o’ theirs—That’s their pride! From what a height—with what exasperating sweetness—affability, God bless the mark!—they speak doon to us!—If I could but believe that it was all raree-show posture-making for the general amusement! That puppy with the cigar noo, liftin’ his hat—Draff, draff—scum, scum! There’s not one of them, but I would like to shake into the reality and humility God meant for them. *Their* pride, indeed!—I’m as proud mysel. There’s the sun, and here’s the gerss and the gowans, and I’m Robin Burness, Mr. Burness, as Coilsfield ca’s me—farmer on his

ain shanks, whilk are no bad anes—and I'm a buirdly chiel, and can stan' wi' the best—and I've a head, and a tongue—a tongue!—(*laughs*)—the Lord help them, puir things, it's weel I like them!—are ye no deceivin', quo she, quo she—are ye no deceivin', quo she? Puir Bess, my wee bit sonsie Bessie! it's your innocence that reflects your daddy's guilt, and, do as I like, it will aye be, 'That's Rab Burness, he's got a bastard wean!' There's no changin' that. And I canna mim my mouth, and straik my hair, and look the saunt, a bit the mair o't, but maun just stoyter on, in my ain way, wi' my lass and my glass, and my quips and my cranks, and my reels and my wheels—and no a waur man for the hale o't. THOU knowest if I am bad—if at the core I am bad. I would not hurt a straw, nor wrong a beggar. I would not be false to a man—for another or myself—no, not to escape hell, or win the universe. I *would* be good—I would be good, and true, and strong. My soul is as a fierce-eyed angel that would wrap the world in its indignant wings, then sink in tears. O my innocent young days—innocent, innocent, up to the fullest manhood—Pruits, truts! dinna mind!—for, 'sure as three times three maks nine, This chap will dearly like our kin', So. leeze me on thee, Robin :

Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin rovin, rantin rovin;
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin rovin Robin!

[*Enter GILBERT BURNES and DAVID SILLAR.*]

Ha! Davie, is that you?—whaur's you twa daunerin to? You'll be after the lasses, na?

DAVID. Ha, ha, ha!

GILBERT (*severely*). We'll leave that to you, Robert: Davie and I are just having a little rational conversation.

DAVID. Yes, we are just talking about literature. But Gilbert tells me, you write yoursel, Robert?

BURNS. I canna say that, Davie; but thae jauds o' lassies, they barm sae in a body's noddle, that

'Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O!

Gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O ;
And warly cares, and warly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O !

Hech ! Davie lad, isna that it ? Ah man, the hizzies—my blessin's on their sweet breaths !

DAVID. Ha, ha ! Robin, you're a terrible fellow. But is't a' Scotch you write ?

BURNS. A' Scotch, a' Scotch—I'm a Scotchman mysel.

DAVID. Yes, but there's no fame to be got in that way—who reads Scotch, an it bena just the Scotch ?

BURNS. True, true. But there's Ramsay—there's Fergusson—I suppose we maun content oursel's with that kind of fame.

DAVID. An we can get it.

BURNS (*rather put out*). Ay, an we can get it. But *you're* sure to get it, Davie. Such a genius as yours—

GILBERT. And why not ? Barbers and writers' clerks do not look such privileged classes.

BURNS. Poor Fergusson ! he died in a cell, mad. But why not take Gibbie's way of it, Davie ? Ye're surely just as gude as a wig-maker at all events ! Try prent, man, try prent : ye may grow into a pawett, just as weel as ony ither worm o' us a' into a butterflee. I hope ye keep what ye write, Davie : mind you, 'Humility has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame.'

DAVID. Yes : I keep some things, and print is a great advantage.

BURNS. Advantage, man ! do you mind what Shenstone says again : 'There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print.'

GILBERT. The sentiment is judicious.

BURNS. I should just think it is judicious. Shenstone, man—

GILBERT. He's a classic, no doubt ; but I do not like his style. He has two which's.

BURNS. I thought of the truth, not the style, and—

DAVID. It's a great thing, style, though ; Gibbie and me, we were just disputing whether the style of Addison or that of Goldsmith was the best.

BURNS. Say *better*, man—the comparative, you know—God bless ye !

GILBERT. Now I would say, which were the better, the style of Addison, or the style of Goldsmith ; I think to repeat the word style, mair harmoniouser. A man of edication is known by the langage he uses.

DAVID. Who knows what Goldsmith would have been, if there had been no Addison before him.

BURNS. Who knows—who knows?—I wonder wha yon lasses are.

GILBERT. Then Pope is not greater than Dryden, because Dryden went before him?

DAVID. Well—isn't it Dryden that's the greatest?

GILBERT. Dryden greater than Pope ! Pope is the greatest Poet that ever lived—isn't he, Robert?

BURNS. Ay, they say sae—they say sae—here's Rankine comin'—but Dryden was a man—[*Enter RANKINE*].—Hoo's a' wi' ye? Hoo's a' wi' ye, man?

RANKINE. Hoch, hoch, hoch ! Three pheelosophers, cheek by jowl ! ye'll hae settled the nawtion by this time. Ye'll be ginny be the Primeer, Robin,—Davie the Lord Chancellor,—and Gibbie a Bishop ! Och, hoch, hoch ! Chitch, chitch, chitch !

BURNS. Better mak' me the king at ance, and then ye'll be my Scotch jester, Rankine.

RANKINE. The affairs o' the nawtion—och, hoch !—the affairs o' the nawtion !

GILBERT. I do not see anything to laugh at, Mr. Rankine, unless it be yourself.

RANKINE. Hear till him, na—hear till him ! That's a' the gratitude I get for makin him a Bishop—Heegh, eegh, eegh ! Chitch, chitch, chitch !

DAVID. That young men should get together for a little intellectual recreation—that seems to you ridiculous, Mr. Rankine?

RANKINE. I'm no again recreation, ye deevil, ye ; nor intellect either, an I had ony ; but I've sic a mell o' a head—

it's owre thick. But ne'er fash your thoomb, Davie; you and me's gude friens. And there's Maister Gilbert—sae as speakin's sair wark—what say ye to a dram? Eh, Gibbie, the feast o' reason, ye ken? Hee, hee! Chitch, chitch, chitch!

BURNS. So be it! A dram, Davie?

DAVID. Well——

GILBERT. O go, if you like, Davie; but I have other things to look after. Robert! you'll no be late the nicht.

BURNS. D—— the lateness!—that's as may be.

GILBERT. Good day, Mr. Rankine—come away, Davie!

SCENE 2.

Mauchline—The Whitefoord Arms. BURNS, RANKINE, and a miscellaneous company.

RANKINE. The Minister! Ou ay, he got gey an' fou, the body, and guffawed like an idivot, daudin his feet on the grun, and roarin out, 'I'm rale happy!'

BURNS. Too bad, Rankine, to spot the cloth in that way.

RANKINE. Drink about, drink about! Peelly, you're as mim's a bit lassie: 'No, thank ye, sir—I canna tak ony mair—it's owre strong!'—Cough, man, cough—Ha, ha! hee, hee! chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. I'm daein vera weel.

BURNS. Dinna press him, Rankine, he canna stan' meikle.

PEELLY. I can stan' a gude deal too—It's the nerves o' my stamach—they're delicate, ye see.

RANKINE. But ye maun dae something—will ye smoke?

PEELLY. I'll try, but it maks me seeck.

RANKINE. Never ye mind that—just stick to it a' the same. Lord! an ye stick to it, ye'll get as fond o't as daft Wattie after he got married.—Wattie, ye maun ken, got sae fond o' his wife, he said he could ha' taen a rug o' her wi' his teeth—Hee, hee, hee! Chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. Hae, hae, hae! That's a gude ane.

RANKINE. Gude Lord, that pleases ye! Hee, hee, hee Chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. Hae, hae, hae!

BURNS. Od, ye're a funny fallow, Rankine.

RANKINE. Peelie you mean—he's just an awfu funny fellow—the stories he tells—that ane, ye mind, Peelie, about the coalier ye gied the bottle to, and, takin it hame, he had to tie it on the far end o' a stick, and keep it aff his person—it proved so strong! Ha, ha! Hee, hee! Chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. Me! I never telt ye that—I never did that!

RANKINE. It wasna you, either, the wee lassie put down the twa farthins to, and asked for a bawbee spew—her faither was sae fou? Ha, ha! Chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. I divna mind o' that eithers.

RANKINE. No? divna ye—are ye no just blate, Peelie? But ye maun do something extraordinar to bring ye out—noo that ye're passed, Peelie—cut aff a man's head, and sew't on again!

PEELLY. Heh! the man wad dee.

RANKINE. He wad dee, wad he? Hee, hee! Chitch, chitch, chitch! But we maun hae some mair drink—Mysie, Mysie!

[*Enter a number of other customers, some known, some unknown—with din and confusion.*]

BURNS. Confound, them! I wish we could have kept by ourselves.

RANKINE. See! we'll push the table up into the corner, and we'll be unco weel, a' the same. Lots can be done in a corner—can they no, Peelie? What! ye're laughing, ye deil, but I'm sure, ye needna be thinkin o' salts and sinny—Ha, ha! Hee, hee! Chitch, chitch, chitch!

PEELLY. I wasna thinkin o' salts and sinny.

RANKINE. No!—but that's odd! Hee, hee! Chitch, chitch!

[*Miscellaneous conversation of drinkers, partly with previous company, partly not.*]

PHRASE. How do you do, Robert? Have you been reading anything new lately?

BURNS. No, nothing particular.

PHRASE. Have you read *Douglas*?—And what do you think of it?

BURNS. Well, no great things. There are words and words, and it's all to be very fine. But there is no life:

is but the pretentious up-and-down of an empty head in the air somehow.

PHRASE (*precipitately*). That just shows your ignorance, then ! It has been pronounced the very perfection of writing by the greatest savans in Edinburgh.

PIMPLES. Well, I think, myself, that Shakespeare's better. The langage o' Shakspeare noo—man, it fills your mou'—it's vera fine!—I'll no say but what the like o' Pope's better, but—

CREESHY. Hae ye heard about the quarrel atween Maister Russell and Maister Moody ?

SANDSTONE. Ay, I well believe there's some of them would—

CREESHY. It wasna dacent for two ministers to misca' ane anither sae.

SANDSTONE. Ay, I well believe, there's some of them not far off would—

BURREL. Well, that was my own opinion, but my wife thought it would be better—

FLINTY. Wull your wife get het water for you at twa in the mornin, when ye bring a frien in—mine wull !

BURREL (*looking at Flinty, but continuing*). So I left it to her, but I just said, Depend upon it, there's nothing like scammony—and neither there is.

GASHBODY. That's good snuff, Jawbone.

JAWBONE. It's the best. It's a London snuff. Do you know the name of the firm ? No ! Well, it's Laddy, Waddy, Taddy, Brown, Baker, Butcher, & Co.—There's a name for you, alarmingly long, extensively large !

GASHBODY. You've a nice box.

JAWBONE. A lady gave it me.

GASHBODY. You're a lucky fellow.

JAWBONE. My brother—the Attorney-Clerk's Depute, you know—gave me this watch : patent lever, capped, and jewelled in four holes.

GASHBODY. It's silver.

JAWBONE. Yes : I'm to get a gold one from my father.

RANKINE. Weel, Johnny, what side do ye tak?

JOHNNY (*the Landlord*). Tak? Od, I'll tak a dram.

RANKINE. Stick to that, Johnny. Be it auld licht or new licht, let it aye licht on a dram. They shan't make a Pope o' I—wull they, Johnny?

PEELLY (*thinking it time to speak*). That's a fine gig our Duncan's got.

BOASS. A gig, has he?

PEELLY. It's pented green.

BOASS. Wi' yellow wheels.

PEELLY. Hoo dae ye ken?

BOASS (*roughly rubbing up Peelly's head of hair*). Hoo dae I ken? Ha, ha, ha!

RANKINE (*to Burns, who, silent since Phrase spoke, had at last laughed*). You're laughing, Robin! well, out wi't, man, —let us hae't.

BURNS. I was just listening.

RANKINE. Well, then, let us hear something—something o' your ain, ye ken—a verse or twa—And here's your subject, Johnny, Johnny himsel. Hoot ay, man! just put your lips to that Castalia.

BOASS. But ye maun tell us whan to laugh—Ho, ho, ho! Ho, ho, ho!

BURNS (*disconcerted for a moment*).

O Johnny, man, O Johnny!

That rhymes to unco funny.

There (*to BOASS*) laugh noo, ye haverel, if ye want to ken whan!

BOASS. Ho, ho, ho! Ho, ho, ho! After that, Robin, gang ye awa hame. (*Attempts to rub up BURNS'S hair.*)

BURNS (*starting up*). Gang hame! Boass, Doctor Boass thae big white chaffs o' yours noo—

RANKINE. Whishtna, Robin, whishtna! Doctor, sit doon. Sit doon, Doctor (*poking BOASS in the stomach with his stick*). I'll swallow ye, Doctor,—I'll swallow ye. (*BOASS sits down cowed*). And noo, what say ye to it, Johnny?

JOHNNY. O it's a' the same to me—a jug o' strong yill, a bottle o' port, a full-flowin bowl, or—

RANKINE. A bowl, a bowl !

ALL. A bowl, a bowl !

BURNS. So be it. I'll pay the piper. There's the shillin, be quick about it, Johnny ! And, meantime, couldna ane o' ye gie's a bit sang.

[*The Cure for all Care is sung.*]

RANKINE. Bravo, bravo ! And here it comes, the Cure for all Care. Push in your glasses, lauds, and let's drink the health o' Robin. Here's to you, Robin ! Ye're a vera deil, but here's to you wi' a' my sowl !

ALL. Rabbie Burness's health ! Rabbie Burness's health !

BURNS (*on his feet*). I thank ye, lauds, this is kind and cordial, noo, and I'm obligated to you. I'm sure it's a pleasure to meet the like o' you owre a jorum o' gude Scotch drink—nane o' your shilpit stuff frae France or blashy trash frae Germany, but gude auld Scotch drink, our mither's milk. And you, you're a' gude Scotch fallows, and I like ye a'—I wunna quarrel wi' ony o' ye. There's my haun, Boass, and there's my haun, Phrase.—Boass, ye buckle your coat owre a crap as big as a bubbly-jock's, and, haudin your head back, ye gie a dirl on the grun wi' your stick, and a hoo-hoo o' a cough that just comes from a barrel of pomposity ; but ye're a gude kind o' a man at your ain fire-side, and ye'll mak a creditable bailie some day. And, Phrase, ye'll mak a bonny white and black minister, dainty i' the tongue, and wi' the periods o' a pendulum, and it's true the savans say, ' Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plan,'—so, here's to you man, here's to you. (*Laughter, cheers, and cries of Here's to you.*)

SCENE 3.

Mauchline—A Dancing-Room—Reels, with floor thumping, and shouts.

BURNS (*with his companions in crowd at door*). Bide a bit, let's see wha's a' there. There's my wanton widow, Leezie, smilin and happy, and roun's an apple, a merry bit body—she's dancin. There's my bit lively, black-ee'd Kate,

and my bit gay, blue-ee'd Agnes—they're dancin'. And there's lowin Peggy, and simperin Sophy—they're dancin'. And saft Bella's dancin, and I declare there's Anna—just see her neck, and her cheeks, and her een, a very heaven o' charms—or a barrowful, by the Lord!—I canna keep my een aff her. And there's my frien' Yes, Sir, and No, Sir, bouncin Bess o' the public—a coorse lump! And, sittin doon, there's that dear lassie, Betty Miller, and Tibby Turn-the-Nose-up, wi' a bit bonny white-faced thing atween them. And yonder's Mysie, 'dour and din, a deil within,' gloomin on everything. See, primsy Maillie's there too; it's either owre het or owre cauld, or owre something or anither, for her to dance, I'm sure. Her sister, Merran wi' the glee'd een, too—yonder she's sittin as she'll sit a' nicht I'm doubtin, wi' the corner o' her apron atween her finger and her thoomb, and her drapped head, smilin, aye smilin, but the deil o' a partner to smile at. And there's saucy Maggie, that thinks naebody bonny but hersel, I trow.—There noo, the dance is owre—in wi' us?

ANNA. Ha, Rab! ye maun dance wi' me.

BURNS. Dance wi' you, ye jaud! Ay to be sure, dance and jump, and onything ye like wi' ye—Hoogh lass, but ye're charmin.

LEEZIE. Gie me my fairin, Rab Burness.

BURNS. Losh Leezie, and is that you?—your fairin is't? Will ye hae a rub o' my baird?

LEEZIE. Ye haena ony.

BURNS (*with action*). Try!

KATE. I want my fairin, too, Rab.

AGNES. And I want mine, Robert.

BESS. Ye maun dance wi' me, Burness.

BURNS. Guide us! I dinna ken what I'm to do amang ye a', but what I hae I'se gie ye—to the very last o't. (*Gives nuts, kissing, or trying to kiss each of them—music plays, and they take partners.*)

MYSIE. He's an impiddent fallow that Rab Burness—I just hate him.

MAILLIE. He's a great rough brute.

MERRAN (*smiling*). He's a funny ane.

MAGGIE. Ye wad a' like to get the offer o' him, though.

Mysie wad smile, and Maillie wad beck, and, as for ye, Merran—

MERRAN. O me !—I say naething against him.

[*Maillie and Mysie murmur.*]

JEAN (*between Betty and Tibbie.*) He's no good-looking ; he's black and he's coorse—rale coorse beside yon bonnie, genteel, red-cheeked laud.

BETTY. There's no a laud in a' the parish that's half sae clever, though.

TIBBIE. Humph ! Wi' a' his cleverness he canna mak a plack : they're as puir as kirk-mice.

JEAN. Ay, and that's Rab Burness !

BETTY. Hae ye never seen him afore ?

JEAN. No—never. Isn't he awfu wild ? They say—they say (*whispering*) he's got a bastard wean.

TIBBIE. Yes, that's true : He may hae dizzens o' them for onything I ken, or care either ; but they keep ane at hame shamelessly in his ain hoose for him, and ye may ken frae that what kin' o' cattle they are—Draff ! I'll never look the road they're on.

BETTY. Ah, he's a gude fallow—a rale warm-hearted laud, and sae clever !

JEAN. They say he can write poetry.

BETTY. Canna he na—sic bonny sangs !

JEAN. Hasn't he awfu een — just like lowin coals ?——sh—sh—shoo ! they mak me a' grue.

TIBBIE. Tuts !—He's a brute, and his folk are puir scum.

BETTY. I like him, then, and I'll aye like him—there's no a man in a' the kintra-side can haud a caunle to him—he's that strong, and ticht, and clever. He's just a man—he's just a king o' men.

JEAN. She's a shameless hizzie, that Anna—hoo she pits hersel up to him ! I wonder he can thole her.

BURNS (*in the midst of immense glee, hearing the howl of a dog, stops suddenly.*) That's Luath. Luath, Luath ! Ha, ye rascal, what are ye daeing here ? Ye've fund me oot—have ye ? Dinna devour me, man !—wow, but ye're fain ! I just wuss I could get a lass wad like me as weel's my dowg.

VOICES. Kick the dowg oot !—and his maister tae !—

curse the fallow ! he's takin up the room to himsel. Curse him, and his dowg tae !—put them oot, put them oot !

BURNS. By the Lord that made ye ! the first amang ye that puts a tae on the puir brute, I'll send to the pit o' hell.

VOICES (*fainter on the outside*). Oot wi' him !

BETTY. Look to him—there's noble—there's grand !

TIBBIE. To swear like a dragoon ?

JEAN. He's like a lion ! But they're owre mony for him—I canna look.

(Curtain falls on some confusion.)

ACT III.

LIFE, LOVE, AND HORROR OF ECLIPSE.

SCENE I.

A Bleaching Green, Mauchline.

JEAN. The clatty brute ! he's rinnin owre a' my washin. Ca' aff your dowg, ca' aff your dowg, sir !

BURNS. The brute ! he's on the claes. Luath, Luath, come here, sir ! I houp he hasna fyled ony thing, has he ?

JEAN. No meikle. There's a sark or twa,—he's pit-patted the ruffles.

BURNS. Really now, I'm very sorry. You rascal you, do you see what you've done ?

JEAN. Dinna hit him.

BURNS. No, I'll no hit him, for it's no his faut either and he doesna ken ony better—if I had been payin attention mysel, gaun like ony body else wi' his natural een open—But I'm rale vexed for you, my lassie,—What'll they say to ye at hame ?

JEAN. O, I'll gie the things a bit syn', and they'll no ken.

BURNS. But that's giein you trouble—upon my word I'm very sorry.

JEAN. O never heed, sir !—the trouble's naething—it's dune noo, and it canna be helped—I'm glad ye didna strike the puir dowg that's sae fond o' ye.—Hae ye fand a lass yet to like ye as weel as he does ?

BURNS. Eh?—My lassie, what's that?—Were ye there, then? Od, I was sure I had seen that bonnie face afore, but, faith, I canna name ye.

JEAN. I'm Jean Armour—Mr. Armour, the maister-mason's dochter.

BURNS. What!—i' the Coogate? Od, ye're a bit bonny thing—ye'll hae lots o' lauds, na?

JEAN. Lauds! what way duve ye think that? I'm owre young for lauds, I'm sure.

BURNS. No a preen! I just wush ye wad tak me.

JEAN. Ye wadna hae a young thing like me.

BURNS. Wad I na?

JEAN. Ye hae owre mony a'ready.

BURNS. I haena ony.

JEAN. Ye needna tell me that! ye hae a dizzen at least, and less nicht ser' ye.

BURNS. A dizzen! No, not one—why should you think so?

JEAN. Ye dinna like Anna, I suppose, nor Leezie, nor Kate, nor Agnes, nor Bess either?

BURNS. Bess! a big ugly hizzie in a public-house?

JEAN. Maybe no her, then; but there's the ithers,—Anna, and Leezie, and Kate, and Agnes?

BURNS. Chuts them! I dinna care a preen-heed for the hale o' them. It's anither sort o' thing that—but you! I could love you—I could mak a queen o' ye.

JEAN. I maun awa and syn' the sarks oot.

BURNS. Let me come and help you.

JEAN. No—dinna come wi' me.

BURNS. What's the matter wi' ye?

JEAN. Naething, but dinna come wi' me.

BURNS. What way no?

JEAN. Because—

BURNS. Because what?

JEAN. I'm frichted for you.

BURNS. Frichted for me! What maks ye frichted for me? I'm sure I wadna hurt a hair o' your heed! I wadna hurt a fly, let alane you.

JEAN. They a' say ye're such a terrible blackguard.

BURNS. Who says that? I should just like to know who.

JEAN. Just everybody.

BURNS. Everybody's a leear, then. I'm sure ye dinna think that ill o' me—Come na (*Jean looking at him, and remaining silent*), tell the truth—I'm sure ye dinna think that ill o' me.

JEAN. No—I dinna think ony ill o' ye.

BURNS. You darling—that's recht, na. You're a dear sweet thing. I kenned frae your bonnie saft een ye were as innocent as a lamb, and couldna think ill o' onybody.

JEAN. My een are no like yours, then.

BURNS. What like are mine?

JEAN. I dinna ken—I canna say.

BURNS. Tell me, na.

JEAN. They mak me grue.

BURNS (*making to put his arm about her*). You darling lassie!

JEAN. Na, na—let me gang and syn' the claes.

BURNS. I'll gang tae.

JEAN. No, that ye maunna!—ye maunna come!—ye maunna, na!

BURNS (*having followed Jean, who now rinses the linen in the stream without entering it*). Are they sair fyled? The rascal—I could just fell him for causing you trouble.

JEAN. And him sae fond o' you!

BURNS. Weel, he *is* fond o' me. Come here, Luath! No, I'll no touch you. Come here, man (*dog springs on him, and caresses him wildly*). That'll dae na—gae doon, Luath!

JEAN. I think I never saw a beast as fond o' onybody afore.

BURNS. Ah, if I could get a lass—if I could get you, for instance—to like me as weel.

JEAN. Me! I dinna ken what love is.

BURNS. Couldna ye learn—from my ainsel, noo?

JEAN. Ye wadna love me.

BURNS. But I do love ye.

JEAN. And ye saw me ance afore, and forgot me: I didna forget you.

BURNS. And I didna forget you—didn't I say I kenned your face?

JEAN. Pooh! that's naething.

BURNS. But it's everything. It proves that, even without my ain kennin, your beauty, as it bude to do, and was meant to do, had won into the very core o' me.

JEAN. I hae nae beauty.

BURNS. You are loveliness itself; you are as beautiful as an angel. What pure innocent eyes you have—what dear sweet lips!

JEAN. Dinna speak to me that way.

BURNS. Why not?

JEAN. I dinna ken. Ye've got to your English, and you mak me trummle.—Gang awa frae me—gang awa frae me—let me synd the claes.

BURNS. But I canna gang awa frae you, and if I could help it, I wadna let you synd the claes—these tender little hands of yours—

JEAN (*looking at her hands*). But what can I dae?

BURNS (*taking a hand*). The bit bonnie wee haun—could I but take it wi' me noo—just to hug it, and kiss it, and speak to it the live-lang day!

JEAN. Let go my haun—let go, wull ye?

BURNS. No, I'll no—I'll just kiss it, I wull.

JEAN. Let go, let go—there's somebody comin.

BURNS (*letting go*). There's naebody—there's naebody comin.

JEAN (*laughing*). I maun syn' the claes.

BURNS. But ye canna syn' them that gait—you'll break your back—you've sae far to loot.

JEAN. I canna gang in the water, and you there.

BURNS. But I'll no do ye ony harm—ye needna be ashamed o' your leggies—they're—

JEAN (*stooping so as to cover her ankles with her petticoats*). Ye dinna see them, I'm sure.

BURNS. Maybe I have seen them.

JEAN. No—never.

BURNS. Let me see them, then?

JEAN. Na, na—dinna touch me—if ye touch me I'll squeal.

BURNS. Gang in, and wash your sarks, then.

JEAN. Gang ye awa, then—I'll no gang in the water before you.

BURNS. What way no ?

JEAN. Just.

BURNS. Weel, I'll turn my back, and you can gang in when I'm no lookin—ance you're in, it'll no matter.

JEAN. No—gang ye awa a'thegither,

BURNS. But I canna gang awa a'thegither.

JEAN. Ye maun, though.

BURNS. But I canna.

JEAN. It's gettin late, and I maun syn' the claes.

BURNS. Synd awa, then.

JEAN. But I maun gang in the water.

BURNS. Gang, then.

JEAN (*hesitating*). Turn ye your back, then (*Burns turns his back*)—but you'll look ?

BURNS. No, I'll no look.

JEAN (*tucking in her petticoats, then suddenly desisting*). I canna gang in the water. Indeed, indeed, ye maun gang awa.

BURNS. What'll ye gie me to gang awa ?

JEAN. Gie ye ? I hae naething to gie you.

BURNS. Ye can gie me something I wad gie a' the world for.

JEAN. Ay, it's true, then—ye're a blackguard after a'.

BURNS. No, I'm no a blackguard, but I wad gie a' I aucht for ae kiss o' your sweet wee mou.

JEAN. Daft fallow ! gae 'wa wi' ye.

BURNS. Gie me the kiss, then.

JEAN. No.

BURNS. Yes, ane.

JEAN. No.

BURNS. Just ane.

JEAN. Maybe somebody 'll see.

BURNS (*taking her in his arms*). There's naebody 'll see.

JEAN. Noo, let me go—let me go—let me go, noo !

BURNS. You'll come and meet me the nicht at the corner o' the kirk-wa.

JEAN. Let me go, then.

BURNS. Promise, then.

JEAN. I promise—there, let me go.

BURNS (*whistles and calls his dog*). Luath, Luath !

SCENE 2.

Mauchline—A Mason's Meeting.

BURNS. Well, it's my opinion.

HORNBOOK (*taking snuff*). It's your opinion!—but, maybe, your opinion is trash, sir, trash. You know nothing of Galen, and as little of Celsus. The noble therapeutic art, to the adepts in which divine honours have been paid—

BURNS. Ye mean the cock o' Aesculawpius—it's wonnerfu how fond doctors and the gods are o' that kind o' sacrifice.

HORNBOOK (*taking a pinch*). Now, it strikes me, Robert Burness, that the cutting of a cock's comb would be the competent sacrifice at this present.

BURNS. Pooh, doctor! your gully's owre blunt.

HORNBOOK. I don't know—a cockerel's but green.

FLINTY. Ha, ha! Nae need o' shairpin-stanes here, I think.

HORNBOOK. Your opinion may be acceptable, sir, when you are able to tell whilk's left and whilk's recht—the heart or the liver.

FLINTY. Od, doctor, I'm content to ken whaur my stomach is, as witness—(*lifting his glass*).

DAL. But, doctor, it's no sae difficle to be a doctor—look to Sangrado and warm water.

HORNBOOK. Well, it's good in its place. The aqua tepida now, or the aqua calida—

DAL. Ye mean the aqua fontis, doctor—

'That is the name the doctors use,
Their patients' noddles to confuse.'

Na, doctor, hooly!

'We'll hae nae mair sic clitter-clatter,
But, briefly to expound the matter,
It shall be—Ferintosh and water,
The whilk, I trow,
Few drogues in doctors' shops are better
For me or you.'

And that means anither bowl, I think.

BURNS. To be sure! Some mair drink to wash awa a' thae midge-tail clippins and mite-horn shavins.

DRODDUMS. That was a fine sermon, last Sawbath—ye gied them a screed o' your mind about it at the kirk-door.

BURNS. Did I? Brunstane for warks, and croons o' glory for blin' faith. What an eldrich cratur, wi' his chirted bagpipes o' speech! Such a theological system I never heard. His doctrine o' Election maun be quite to the heart o' Auld Cloutie.

DRODDUMS. But, Robert, ye ken to be elected the ae way, is to be elected the ither also.

BURNS. Haud your tongue, Droddums, ye ken naething about it.

DRODDUMS. Deed, no meikle.

STALLFED. And is an educated minister not to have more weight in theology than folk who only ca' the shuttle or haud the plough?

BURNS. Certainly.

DRODDUMS. That's true.

BURNS. I don't know after all. He appeals to the common sense of the whole of us.

DRODDUMS. There's nae doubt he does.

STALLFED. Then a dozen years of special training can place a minister only on the level of his hearers?

BURNS. I don't say that.

DRODDUMS. Humph! we can't say that.

BURNS. And yet I don't know. What gude comes o' your Latin and Greek? College!—ye gang in stirks, and ye come out asses.

DRODDUMS. That's true too—some folk are no meikle better for the College.

DAL. Good for you, Droddums! Ye ken ae case at least, dinna ye?

DRODDUMS. Hoots! I ken several.

STALLFED. It is natural to despise advantages we can lay no claim to.

BURNS. Advantages! What says Sterne?

STALLFED. O, I leave Sterne to you.

DRODDUMS. There seem's something both ways.

DAL. Droddums, ye've settled it.

PHRASE. Have you read Burke's speech on the present affairs, Stallfed?

STALLFED. A fine piece of eloquence, but exaggerated.

PHRASE. The style is loaded.

BURNS. Like a cannon, i' faith!—heavy metal, sirs, and turned the richt way.

STALLFED. You refer to America.

BURNS. I refer to this, that Burke is for the oppressed—for the rights of man.

STALLFED. For rebels, you mean.

BURNS. Rebels!—oppressed fellow-subjects—I quite glory in Burke for the side he takes.

STALLFED. Few mind him in the House.

BURNS. How often is it not so?—Majorities wrong, minorities right.

PHRASE. You are fond of paradox, Robert.

BOOSIE. He's talking nonsense.

STUTTERS. Doesn't know what he's saying.

BURNS. And yet the highest that was ever born of woman was precisely in a minority of one.

SEVERAL. Who was that?

BURNS. You don't know!

STALLFED. He means the Saviour. But that was not man. That you know, or ought to know, Mr. Robert Burness, was God Himself. When we speak of human matters, we must use human illustrations.

BURNS. But Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate—the Jews and Romans who were then and there—surely it was a man *they* saw.

REDJOWL. Hush, Burness! we cannot hear sacred things irreverently talked of.

PHRASE. It's injudicious.

BOOSIE. It's ignorance.

STUTTERS. It's empty self-conceit, *I* think.

BURNS. Was there ever the like of this? Am I saying one word against religion—one word that the most outrageous frenzy of orthodoxy can object to?—I deny nothing—I impugn nothing. You all know my meaning well enough. It is dishonesty—it is rank dishonesty and cowardice to take me up in that manner.

HORNBOOK (*taking a pinch*). Mr. Robert Burness! no

doubt you have some—some (*taking another pinch*)—taelent, but you ought to know that it is quite out of place—

BURNS. Pshaw! An ass's hoof by way of a flat-iron to end the dressing, is rather too much—stick to your rod, doctor,—I've one in pickle for you mysel. Urinus spiritus of capons! Some books are lees frae end to end, doctor, Even ministers they hae been kenned, doctor, In holy rapture, A rousin whid at times to vend, doctor, And nail't wi' scripture.

FLINTY. Good, Burness, good! it maks us hear just as you speak: it's glimp and perjink.

DAL. The clink's no that ill.

BURNS. Dal and Flinty, you're about the best amang them—

DRODDUMS. And me, Robin, and me!

BURNS. Ay, and you, Droddums,—I see ye, man—but as for the rest, they've soured my drink, and I maun awa hame. That is always the way of it! Dishonesty, cool and wary,—not caring a brass farthing for the truth,—while red-hot honesty—that knows nothing *but* the truth—will be held up to the reprobation of well-meaning fools like Stutters and Redjowl, and gullible imbeciles like Boosie, and buttery-mouthed prick-my-dainties like Phrase, by a great big, fozie, long-toothed, jinkin-ee'd, fause-ee'd, white-faced ghost of orthodoxy like Stallfed—who does not believe one word—unless rhetorically. But I just say this, and I leave you.—Did it not make it all the stronger for what *I* said, that it was what *ye* said? Even when Deity came to earth, Deity was there precisely in a minority of one. Now, Hornbook, now—up with your hoof, man!

SCENE 3.

BURNS and JEAN *meeting at Night.*

JEAN. O, Robert!

BURNS. If ye're ginny greet, I'm aff.

JEAN. I'll no greet—I'll no greet.

BURNS. Does your father ken?

JEAN. My mither telt him.

BURNS. What did he say?

JEAN. He turned as white as a clout, and his een ken'led—I rase and ran.

BURNS. And what did he say to you when you saw him after?

JEAN. I havena seen him—he's taen to his bed.

BURNS. But I canna marry you, Jean—(*Jean sobs*)—I've no money—I canna stay here—I've to gang abroad.

JEAN. O, what will become o' me—o' me? What will I do? O, that I had never seen you!

BURNS. Are you vexed you have ever seen me?

JEAN. Everybody will cry shame on me—the very folk I despise.

BURNS. Tell me, na! Are ye vexed ye have ever seen me?

JEAN. I have ither things to think o'—it's no a time to talk in that way. It was sweet luvie, but it's a' bye.

BURNS (*after long silence*). No! I canna help it—I canna marry—we've dune nae good in the farm—I canna stay.

JEAN. O me—how can I ever haud up my head again?

BURNS. Ye said ye wadna greet.

JEAN. I canna help it—I'm sure I would if I could.

BURNS. Try! There's a gude lassie—Dinna greet!

JEAN. It's cruel, cruel—it's cruel o' ye—so it is.

BURNS (*taking her in his arms*). But what can I do?

JEAN. I'm sure I've liked ye weel, weel—I'm sure I've liked ye.

BURNS. And I've liked you.

JEAN. Ye dinna like me noo—ye canna care for me noo—I'm a lost lassie.

BURNS. Dinna reproach me.

JEAN. I dinna reproach you—O, I'm no reproaching you, I'll no reproach you.

BURNS. Dinna greet, then.

JEAN. I maun greet—I canna but greet—O what will become o' me—o' me?

BURNS. Hush noo, my darling Jean,—dinna greet, na,—dinna greet!

JEAN. Dinna touch *me*—dinna come near *me*—I'm no worth the mindin noo.

BURNS. But you *are* worth the mindin—you are my ain darling Jean yet—the only lassie I care a button for.

JEAN. I'm naeboddy's lassie—naeboddy's darling noo—but ye ken yoursel! Ye ken yoursel, if it was a' my faut.

BURNS. No indeed, puir lassie! it wasna your faut—I've been a bad fellow, Jean—can ye forgie me?

JEAN. I'm no blamin ye—there's naething to forgie—I liked you owre weel, that was a'!

BURNS. And dinna I like you, Jean?

JEAN. But you're gaun awa—you're ginny lea' me—you're ginny lea' me!

BURNS. I hae nae siller.

JEAN. Ye dinna like me—that's it—ye canna like me noo.

BURNS. By heaven, I like you! On my knees I swear it. From my soul I love you—As long as the red blood runs in my veins, I'll love you! I won't go away—I won't leave you—You're my wife and my love—I'll proclaim you to be my wife before the world, and I'll do day-labour, but I'll win your bread for you!

JEAN. O Robert—my ain Robert!

SCENE 4.

Old Rome Forest—August—A Moor, towards night.

(BURNS *alone.*)

And is this the end?—To leave my country, and my native place—to sink, it may be, in a week, out of sight into a jungle of the climate, a negro-driver, uncared for, unthought of, never missed!—Death in a ditch!—O Scotland, dear old Scotland, dear old Coila, the bonny braes, the rowin burns, the lauds and lassies! I, who had thought to be something—I, whose soul had glowed into a million great things that were to come!—And it is *this* has come!—O, all my grand, grand intentions! And my morning was so fair and promised so well! I had a good home, a kind mother, and a good good father, who fired me into knowledge—but what have I made of it all? I was quick to see and learn—quick quick to feel—and I could judge for others, but for myself—No! That was another thing—that was to be left from moment to moment, just to the stang of inclination. What scenes,

what scenes, as I look back upon them ! I dare not think—I dare not think of what I am. The free conscience, the honest heart that held me up—I cannot claim them now. And so I fall—creeping for shelter from hiding to hiding—For the fear of what ?—A jail !—I in a jail !—a jail for me !—Yes, I am a ‘hope-abandoned’ wretch, ‘oppressed with care’—O, as for that, I never was ‘fitted with an aim.’ And where the fault ? I might have made it different ; but is the fault all mine ? O my young days ! All was bright then—innocent. I worked, and I bore want—gulped humiliation weekly, daily. But nothing prospered. We have done no good—never—not at the last, here.—No ! it has not been all my fault. And what *was* mine, have I not offered to repair it, all that I could ? I have not skulked cowardly off—I have not cruelly turned my back. I have owned free—I have stood openly forward. And how has it been taken ? Marriage with me cannot solder up the character of the mason—the *master* mason’s daughter ! It would be a greater disgrace to him that she should be my wife, than that she should have been my mistress ! And he blows the whole affair abroad by hunting me into a jail for *alimant*—O the shillings !—the shillings a week ! Her mother denies me the house, and Jean is thowless—turns from me to them,—nay, is actually smitten, they say, with the brosie red cheeks of a Paisley weaver. Poor, perjured ken-nae-better ! may God forgive her. I do—I love, O I love her still ! I *am* a forlorn wretch—I have given up my share of the farm (they cannot come upon that !)—and I am as loose as a knotless thread. All turn against me—her father, her mother, herself, even Aitken that stood so strong by me.—When he cut my name out of the lines, it was my veins he cut—my heart died within me when I heard of it. I am just a blackguard, a hooted blackguard. I am a blackguard to them,—a blackguard to my mother, and the rest of them. I am a blackguard to the town, and the whole country-side—and not even to the most of them a *clever* blackguard, but distasteful and repulsive as a blasphemous, impious, profane, and Godless ruffian, a wretch infamous and disreputable ! As *that*, I have had to stand, Sunday after Sunday, in the church, *recognised, rebuked, censured,*

under the eyes of all. What am I, then, but a common and a public blackguard? The lady at Ballochmyle, how could she write to me—acknowledge my song? I am a blackguard to my own self: drink, bastards, freethinking! And O, such a fool as I am! None of the ways of the world mine—no reserve—all openness and ready speech. Curse that garrulity and constant *lapsus linguae*! I have no discretion, and every man is free to be familiar with me—At the same time that I set them all on edge by my emphasis and self-assertion. Pride of observation and remark, truly! And I am social without bounds or limits, and would have them all to like and agree with me. For all that, I am but a hectic mixture of hilarity and hypochondria, with a weak, prurient curiosity that is the secret of my knowledge. What am I good for? Here, on this moor, what am I good for? My cleverness has been all a delusion. The gloomy night is closing over me. Storm and tempest are in the sky. But I feel neither the wind nor the rain. I am an outcast. Nature herself, that always smiled her gladness over me, lowers now, and turns her back on me. Not one of all her creatures will ever more raise a throb in me. The earth is dull and the waters on it. Mournful the chirp of the birds, and joyless the trees, and the windows of the heavens are blank. I have been forced to let go my very name, that I may no longer disgrace under it the relatives that bear it. The name of infamy! it had to be blotted from the very paper that bound me to a husband's and a father's duty. A father's duty! My Bess, the poor children, what have they done?—how can I meet before my God the reproaches of those I had deserted in the smiling innocence of their helpless infancy? But what can I do? *My* reparation is but a deeper injury, a deadlier insult: the wretch is too poor! And now, in the dark of night, while thunder mutters and the raindrops pour, I take my last farewell. Robert Burness, that was once a hope to the noblest human being that ever made the name of father sacred,—Robert Burness, that was once all *that*—is now Robert Burns, a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, an outcast and a blackguard!—An end, an end—Oh, were there but an end! (*It thunders.*) Strike me (*throwing himself prone upon the ground*)—strike

me, thou leven-bolt, strike me—helpless, hopeless, lost,
creation's last !

ACT IV.

EDINBURGH AND AFTER : THE BLAZE AND ASHES.

SCENE I.

*Edinburgh—Ante-Room of Public Assembly—the Hall seen
through opening—December.*

(A GUEST—*looking through Opening into Main Room.*)

And that is Burns ! How they crowd around him—what a lion they make of him ! There now, disappointing quite a bevy of Lords, Ladies, Honorables, and others, it is the Duchess has taken him up—the country ploughman that, with his strong hodden Scotch-English, has turned all our heads,—to whom cards of invitation fly by the dozen,—of whom the newspapers prate all manner of anecdotes—How long will it last ?—Strongish-built, and of good middle height, or tallish rather, and agile,—there is manhood in the movement and make of him—freedom—somewhat loutish in shoulder and leg, though he be.—Ah, he turns—what a face for energy ! His eyes flame, and every feature speaks. Scorn and compassion, nobility and mischief there ! Dark hair on a fair-arched forehead, but not positively high and not positively broad. Round chin, full lips under a short, pointed, but not uncomely nose—full lips, wreathed infinitely between the swarthy cheeks of glowing red. Now he is coming this way, with the small fry bouncing at him.

BURNS (*those around him vying for his attention, till he is bored out of all patience*). And (*turning on a critic who is talking loudly in dispraise of Gray's Elegy*) what have you to say against that line, sir ?

CRITIC. The ninth foot is too long.

BURNS. But the sentiment ?

CRITIC. O, the sentiment ! One cannot feel it for the metre, you see.

BURNS (*half aloud*). And a man may be an excellent critic by square and rule, but, after all, a d——d blockhead.

BLAIR. Pardon me, Mr. Burns, but Society does not usually hear——

BURNS. I did not see you, Dr. Blair ; and I thought I spoke to myself. Perhaps, too, it was not so very far wrong.

BLAIR. Sincerity is a virtue, no doubt, Mr. Burns ; but a virtue when over-charged degenerates into vice. And then it was a clergyman you spoke to.

BURNS. He talked like a blockhead ; but I respect the cloth, and I am sorry if he heard me ; though, after all, he pretty well deserved it.

BLAIR. But there is more than that, Mr. Burns. These tones now. Deference is always amiable and pleasing, but these dictatorial tones——

BURNS. I am vexed if I blundered, but I cannot help speaking as I feel ; and the truth, somehow, is always on the tip of my tongue.

BLAIR. Did we but reflect, how very perfect we ought to be ourselves before we presumed to censure others——

BURNS. Now, Dr. Blair, you are always telling me that I should not have done it, and I say so myself.

BLAIR. Yes, but if, in any way, I possess what gives me a right to rebuke, Mr. Burns, it is my duty to insist on a fault which, only glanced at and left, may become inveterate. I know not that anything imports more than to give every man his due, be he prince, or lord, or minister of the church.

BURNS. O, if you come to that of it, Dr. Blair, I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, and critics, as they by me. My creed is that the man is the gold, and the rank but the stamp upon it. Even a ploughman must be allowed stiffness in his bow, if he has to meet impertinence. Why should mere greatness ever embarrass him ? In a matter of judgment now, I hold that there is no room for rank. If even a duke submits his poems to me, am I not to judge of them independently of his dukeship ? Is there such a thing as a *ducal* judgment, which we must learn ?

BLAIR. I have no wish to advise, Mr. Burns, perhaps no right, but——

BURNS. I am as sorry to have done wrong as any other

man, but I scorn to play the part of servility or craft. I know I am what people, with a lift of the chin, call nobody. I can lay claim to neither gules, argent, nor purple ; mine is a scoundrel blood, and has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood : but I keep a high heart for all that. I have only been found, after all, where Elijah found Elisha, and I know at least one man in this world—and I do not mean myself—who brings his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God. Before Him, depend upon it, Dr. Blair, it is enough to be true.

BLAIR. Mr. Burns, Mr. Burns, you have greatly misunderstood me.

BURNS. O I know what it is for a man to have the sense of injured worth, and feel the throe of indignation at undeserved neglect, as at undeserved distinction lavished on the unworthy. And I have the consciousness of some merit, else I should not be here ; but I hope I am neither forward, vain, nor presumptuous. The world is such, and I am such, that I must bear on my front an honest protest against the venality and prostitution of poor men and poets. It is not in manhood to submit to the sneer of contumelious greatness. For my part, indeed, I will always advertise *my Lord*—just *my Lord*, whilk ane o' them ye like,—and I hope without derogation or offence,—that I have a fortune in the plough, and a heart, I trust, as independent as his *Lordship's*.

BLAIR. You have taken the bit between your teeth, Mr. Burns ; but you must come to a halt when your breath is out. What I ask is this—for I say nothing against all that, a man must in his place be a man, and conduct himself accordingly, but—is it becoming to lay down the law ? Rudeness can only excite uneasiness and disgust. He who is accustomed to a polite and judicious conversation——

BURNS. If I have been rude, there is no more to be said, Dr. Blair—I kiss the rod.

BLAIR. I am sure you know yourself, Mr. Burns, that the ribaldry of a porter or a hackney-coachman, the unrespecting exclamations of a peasant or a clown——

BURNS. Dr. Blair, you crucify me.

BLAIR. It is in the conduct of life, Mr. Burns, as it is in judging the Belles Lettres. Every voice is united in applaud-

ing elegance, propriety, simplicity, and in denouncing coarseness, rudeness, fustian, in either respect. That delicacy of sentiment which is contracted in the exercise of judgment and refinement, is necessary to both. Rustic songs, now, and rural ballads please the vulgar, while he who knows the charms of more finished compositions detects at once the unskilfulness of their manner and the insipidity of their matter. To pass one's time, for example, only in the company of good authors—Mr. Pope, now—Corneille, Racine—Virgil, Lucretius—Horace, Terence, Cicero—

DUGALD STEWART. Were you ever in Paris, Dr. Blair? No! Well, I can hardly tell you how you would enjoy standing in the *Place du Panthéon* there, and reading the names inscribed on the walls of the *Bibliothèque de Ste. Geneviève* which occupies pretty well one side of the square. Fancy!—between the windows, above them, below them, everywhere on the outside of that library, you will find, deep-sculpt in long lists, all the great writers of all the ages, and of all the nations, as thus—

Homer.	Æschylus.	Rabelais.	Cervantes.	Newton.
Virgil.	Sophocles.	Montaigne.	Calderon.	Leibnitz.
Dante.	Euripides.	Molière.	Petrarch.	Descartes.
Milton.	Shakespeare.	Voltaire.	Ariosto.	Diderot.
Tasso.	Corneille.	Rousseau.	Boccaccio.	D'Alembert.

BLAIR. Really, now, Professor Stewart, that is very interesting.

D. STEWART. Some men seem actually to live in that square, Dr. Blair, and for no other purpose than just to say low to themselves all these names, the one after the other,—Diderot, D'Alembert, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau.

BLAIR. In matters of taste, that polite nation, the French, certainly excels us. Compare the harmony, now, the enlightenment of reading such names with the brutality of wild-beast shows, and the frivolity of fashionable attires that flutter round flower-beds. To my mind it is a contrast of civility and barbarism.

BURNS. Names, names! Ay, Dr. Blair, the names of literature seem themselves a literature. How many men are there not—high in repute, too—who, knowing nothing of the books, make very effective literary play with the

names of their authors—quite to the admiration, respect, awe of the public indeed; who, good souls that they are, take all on credit! Though never having read a single page of either, they *say* the names Plato and Aristotle, for example, quite irresistibly; and they are quite aware what an impression it makes, to flourish in our faces Homer, and Virgil, and Cicero—how it dazzles the most, and even charms pretty well all. But will any one put the trick in the scales, and tell me the weight of it? At a book-stall, the other day, I opened in an old magazine, an article on an author now alive, in which it was said that this author, as of preternatural powers, had devoured all learning, and made himself master even of the most recondite—the leviathan Proclus, and the behemoth Plotinus. Meeting, soon afterwards, this said preternatural author himself, I spoke to him about the article, and learnt that, while he himself had never even seen any actual work of either Proclus or Plotinus, and had long forgotten all the little Greek he brought from college, the writer of the article, again (whose name he mentioned), was, to his own positive personal knowledge, utterly incapable of reading a single word of Greek—anywhere—not in Proclus or Plotinus, but in any schoolboy's primer! There is a deceit here against which the public has no security: it is daily in the humiliating position of receiving, admiring, and paying for—a *non-existent erudition*!—and on the strength of names! Both reviewer and reviewed, now, what giants they must have loomed to the reader because of Proclus and Plotinus, and above all, what profound Grecians! It is consoling to reflect that the very lowliness of a Scotch versifier guarantees honesty, and is beyond the suspicion of a spurious pretence. Whatever he offers is at least his own, and genuine in its kind.

BLAIR. Well, yes, Mr. Burns, you have attracted considerable attention and—yet, despite what Ramsay and others may have done to secure the ground, it is doubtful if ever Scotch will be to the moderns what Doric was to the ancients. The Doric was at least a dialect among dialects.

BURNS. But Fergusson, Ramsay—with such genius in the works they have left—It is impossible—they must be imperishable! One spark of Nature's fire can glorify any dialect.

BLAIR. Well, I am not sure, Mr. Burns. Nature is

certainly the raw material; but of what value is any raw material until it is dressed—and who among the polite will ever regard a rude lowland provincialism as dress? This consideration of dress, indeed, decides in far more important questions than we have here. Who, now, would assert an equality of genius and elegance for Bunyan and Addison, or for Dryden and Mr. Pope?

BURNS. Not I for one. It seems to me there is in Bunyan and Dryden what no polish in Addison or Pope can make up for the want of.

BLAIR. Bunyan! what refinement have you there? Childish giants, and milk-maid meadows——

BURNS. A milk-maid meadow in the sun with butter-cups and daisies, and the kye switching as they feed, is not a bad picture, Dr. Blair; but think of the stamp of popular estimation. Bunyan has gone home to the heart of the people and the peoples. His book is there in numberless editions, and in numberless translations. Sterne himself sneers not at the popularity it has won, but would be content to overtake it. Old and young bow to the graphic touch and intense vividness of—the *style* if you will—Bunyan's style, a style not manufactured, but grown. The writing of Bunyan is a natural stream of clear vernacular, just like natural water over natural chucky-stones. His style—if you will call it dress—is hodden, it may be, but it is clothes to warm and cover us; while the style of Addison is but a cobweb of muslin for the glitter of a night. Addison—his style! It is so icy and thin that a seal would perish of cold, and a tortoise die of inanition on it. Why, the man cries to us to look to the sun and the moon, for all the world as the show-man does to the right and the left.

D. STEWART (*aside*). Such dreadful heretical opinions will kill the doctor—he is pale to the lips.

BLAIR (*with a gulp*). I shall not dispute it with you, Mr. Burns. You know, of course, best—you are a judge of style. But what of Dryden and Mr. Pope now—what do you say of them?

BURNS. I am always under your authority, Dr. Blair; but I submit that Dryden is the very master of verse. What masculine power, what elastic force, what natural ease!——

'His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone,
For he was great ere fortune made him so ;
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.'

There is something of Dryden's self even in that, and what a picture of Cromwell it is ! Pope, the knurlin, never could have done anything like it.

BLAIR. I make you my compliments on your perspicacity, Mr. Burns ; but the fact is, that the delicacy of sensibility which opens with warmth to beauties, closes as coldly to faults. It is perhaps natural that what is rough should appear to you strong ; but strength itself is no set-off, as I think, against perpetual slovenliness, and the incessant shock of vulgar descents. To me the *crassa* Minerva has forfeited her divinity. And, for the rest—it remains, I apprehend, at the last thus :—Mr. Pope, in point, polish, precision, in neatness, niceness, and elegance of execution, is reached by no one, not even by Virgil. In Pope, there are no disharmonies and dislocations ever and anon to grate and interrupt ; all in him is perfect ; and not one product does he turn out of hand but is a gem—bright, clear, sharp, pure in colour, brilliant in surface, and of exquisite delicacy in finish and setting.

BURNS. I like the flowers of the field, Dr. Blair, better than the gauds of the shop ; and it is really possible sometimes to spin a thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.

BLAIR. Taste, Mr. Burns, taste is the single desideratum ; for, the superiority to vulgar prejudice which is also necessary, taste itself gives. It is only where taste is that refinement is understood, and even what are called strong flashes perceived to be disfigurements, and not embellishments—'A cultivated taste increases sensibility to all the tender and humane passions, while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.'*

BURNS. I observed that passage in your *Lectures*, Dr. Blair. It is, perhaps, an improvement on Mr. Hume when he winds up his paragraph on the delights of taste with,—

'It improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions.

Ingenious dic—dickie'—

Confound the Latin! I cannot mouth it, but it is the same as yours.

BLAIR. Ha, ha! Ha, ha! You are inimitable with your ingenious and ingenuous dick—dickies, Mr. Burns. I own I had that passage in my eye when I wrote my *Lectures*; but no one need feel ashamed to copy Mr. Hume. Depend upon it, it is all true, whoever says it, and, to quote myself again, 'In the education of youth, no object has appeared in every eye more important to wise men than to tincture them early with a relish for the entertainments of taste.'

BURNS. Well now, Dr. Blair, I saw that too, but I had a little difficulty with it. The clause, 'in every eye,' was probably only involuntarily introduced on, so to speak, the hum of the balance; but that 'every eye' seems suddenly reduced simply to a wise one. But that is not my difficulty—I had a little difficulty in fitting together the pieces of the subsequent metaphor rather. Is not to tincture connected with to tinge, colour, dye; and is not to dye with a 'relish' something too forcible a figure? We might taste a dye, but how could we dye a taste, or, worse still, how could we dye with a taste?

BLAIR (*with a sudden pant*). Man, ye're a blockhead.

BURNS. And all this time, your anger at me, Dr. Blair, has been because I called the critic of Gray's Elegy that! It is true I *added* a word, but even that word you yourself had sanctioned; for you remember you advised me yourself to change *salvation* into *damnation*, and I followed your advice, humbly as in duty bound. (*Dr. Blair walks up and down in agitation—Burns continues deprecatingly.*) In fact, Dr. Blair, you are the only man I ever altered a printed word for. I hope you know the respect I entertain for you, and will kindly overlook my ploughman ways, and mitigate your displeasure at me. It is to you I owe the most sensible obligations. You are the greatest living literary authority. Yes, Dr. Blair, of all men it is known that you are at the

head of fine writing. It is to you I am indebted for the prince of poets, Ossian. I acknowledge that I have done wrong—that I had no business to speak—that I should only have listened. I grant your vast intellectual superiority—I honour your excellent heart—I am proud of your patronage—I—

BLAIR. Well, well, say no more, Mr. Burns ; I must go now, but come and see me—to-morrow night—you have got a card.

(*Exit* Dr. BLAIR : BURNS and DUGALD STEWART look at each other and laugh, the latter with his hand before his mouth.)

SCENE 2.

*Neighbourhood of Mauchline—Top of Rising Ground—
April 1788—Sunday.*

(BURNS alone.)

What Sabbath stillness ! And He said, Peace be unto you — my peace I give unto you ! *His* peace — peace as of God's blessing—broods upon the calm—the calm of the far universe. No sound ! Nor breath of wind ! The very smoke is moveless from the sun-dreaming cottages. And, yonder on the horizon's verge, see flash of water 'neath the distant hill, but silent—silent as the rest ! Hark ! even cheer of chanticleer rings but as echoing silence in the silent far.

It is the turn of fate with me. Now am I on the summit of my life, even as here, upon this height, I dominate the landscape. Edinburgh has come and gone ; and now it is for me to settle what the rest shall be. One thing *is* settled—I have taken Ellisland. I must plough my own land far from the great, unheeded and alone. Perhaps a distant echo may come back to me, should I throw them again a rhyme or two. And is not that enough—what can I hope for more ? I must live, and to live I must work. I was not born with privilege, and neither will privilege be made for me. But must I not say, Father, it is well—I thank thee ? Little more than a year ago, I was a poverty-stricken, despised, and friendless vagabond, a homeless fugitive,—and now I have honour, fame, and fortune, and I come from the

admiring homage of the highest in the land. The people gape with awe at me, who, a few months ago, spurned me with disgust, or could not even see me for our distances. I have given comfort to the home that rocked itself in shame over the thought of me—I have made glad my mother's heart—and my brothers and my sisters look up to me with gratitude—ay, respect—nay, wonder !

I have the wherewithal to begin life again as a bein farmer and as weel respectit as the lave—rather with the distinction of a name, for at orra times I may rhyme, man ! It is a fair prospect. But shall I not think of what I have been and seen—of what I might be and see—of what I ought to be ? They think this is enough for me—more than I had any right to expect, the peasant, fallen on some peasant rhymes—a ploughman, the *Ayrshire Ploughman* ! Little do they know me—ha ! I am more than that. I have seen *them*, I have tried *them*, and—put us as man to man—the biggest of them all I will not quail to.

But now, it has all passed, and here in this letter of Blair's I can read the whole story. But that I knew and said all along—that the bubble of novelty would burst. Ah ! I lived along the lines, and I knew there was not one of them of that construction would bear the stress of a change. I told them so, and I told them true. Not one of them all writes to me even, but that good-hearted young fellow, Ainslie. I said I expected 'contemptuous neglect;' and no doubt the 'illiberal abuse' will follow. It was not in the nature of things that it could be kept up, or that I could keep it up. *Such* a world must, in any case at last, have turned with a shrug from this fury that boils in me at dishonesty and craft—that rages in me at unmerited reward as at unmerited neglect.

I am not of their order, *they* are not of *mine*. How often, thinking I had been *offered* boundless trust, I *went* with boundless trust, to meet—a stare !—a stare that chilled me into a sense of the liberty I took, or mortified me by the suspicion that I had an interest to serve—copies to sell, or worse still, that I had calculated a rise from their countenance—*their* countenance !—good Lord, the wretches !—d——n them !

There was not one of them with whom I was safe to let myself all out—talk nonsense if I would—unless Ainslie, and I have no hope but to keep him. I was never a rogue, but I have been a fool all my life, and I never could conciliate respectability. That, I suppose, is why they feel me, and I feel myself, out of place among them. They all understand each other, know and expect each other's ways ; for they have all one and the same object, worldly rise. Such a man as I, that never made one effort for pelf or worldly rise in my life, can only throw them off their gearing and out of their bearings.

Yet, what a sudden change it was ! How miserable up to then had almost my whole life been ! Acquiring knowledge, seeing characters, writing my bit papers—So, to rise into myself with joy, and feel myself somebody, and yet, at kirk and market, find myself nobody, a poor insignificant devil, stalking up and down, unnoticed and unknown, passed with contempt, or passed as invisible. How I used to dwell on that contrast, painting the two sides, and end by looking gloomily forward only to oblivion and the grave ! Or I played with it—tearfully—and fancied 'the last o't, the warst o't, was only but to beg ;' and 'that lying in kilns and barns at e'en' might, after all, not be so bad ; that I should always have the freedom of 'nature's charms, the hills and woods, the sweeping vales and foaming floods ;' and that I still could sit on sunny braes when simmer cam, and 'sowth a tune !'

I was impulsive and impetuous ; but oh, the wrongs of life ! A man has been out of work ; his family is starving ; he is weak himself, bloodless, spiritless, abject : see him crouching, whining for work to cruel indifferent insolence, —crouching, whining, grovelling, ever the lower and the lower, the more rejection, and rejection, and rejection render visible to his haggard eyes, the shelf without a loaf, the grate without a fire ! Is there in human life a more mortifying spectacle than that—in want of work, the starving father of a starving family ? Oh,

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn !
See yonder poor o'erlaboured wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,

Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him—*leave to toil!*
And see his lordly fellow worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.
If I'm designed yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law designed—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellows mourn?

How these feelings raged in me as I was first in Edinburgh! Houses upon houses, people upon people—but I was an outcast among them all; no one looked at me: what was to be the end of it? Was I to live, or was I to die? My life curdled into the centre of that one thought. How I wandered about the streets, wearied, foot-sore, cowed,—my braces lengthened, and my breeches greasy,—looking into the bookseller's windows—among all the books there, not one copy of mine!—glowering up at Allan Ramsay's house, or into his old shop; kneeling at the grave of Ferguson, kissing the sod, not seeing it for tears, thinking I should soon be there myself,—thinking it, wishing it,—a wretch forlorn! Ah yes, that was it—was I to live or was I to die? As I say, my life was curdled into the centre of that one thought.

And yet it was grand: coronetted Edinburgh, throned in chill gold, rock-bastioned, mountain-watched, and smiled to by the enshrining sea! It was a joy to climb the hill, and look abroad, from this side and from that, upon the variegated landscape, far and far,—a joy to greet the castled rock, like a grim old veteran, hard as iron,—a joy to see the palace, where the kings held court, and whence the men of the great names bore forth the bloody lion to the fray. O yes, the poor wretch could feel his heart beat, and his bosom lift—even before the flood came; and it came in about a week!

They all rushed to me—they almost fought for me: lord, and knight, and squire—lawyer, doctor, and priest. I was

the bruited lion of society, and I roared for everybody. But I knew well what it all meant, I knew well what it was all worth—I was not dazed or carried away by it : I kept my feet, and my head too ! Fashion was stung, and it was a blind rout. But it was only fashion. The small, knowing hat, just out, awes this year ; but absolutely droll beside the grave Don of the next, it even tickles us to laugh. I knew where I would be when the tide fell.

And it *has* fallen.—Look to this letter of Dr. Blair's :—‘The success you have met with I do not think was beyond your merits ; and if I have had any small hand in contributing to it, it gives me great pleasure.’ Most unexceptionable propriety, and mim-mouthed baitedness of breath ! The propriety, however, rather overleaps itself, or even falls on the other : was it the smallness of the hand gave him the greatness of the pleasure ? The success was fully up to my merits ! What sort of success was it ? The success of a raree-show ? And it is shut up now ! I have played my part, and must strip for the corduroys again. ‘As far as I have known and heard !’ Unimpeachable distinction condescends to grant the poor devil a certificate, but guarded—as it is only proper that unimpeachable distinction should be guarded—‘I am happy that you have stood it so well as far as I have ever known or heard’—still carefully guarded, you see—but ‘you are now, I presume, to retire to a more private walk of life.’ Retire ! And to a more private walk of life ! Am I not as good as he is ? Why should my walk of life be more ‘private’ than his one ? Is it that the little ragamuffin from the slums, who has succeeded in throwing his summer-set to the quality has been *dismissed*—with a smile and a penny, and the advice only due from them—to keep his face clean ?

But I am all too bad. He says he has taken ‘the liberty of an old man,’ and I am sure he means well. Still there is that ineffable air : *he* is a god, beneficently to look down ; *I* a suppliant, only to look speechlessly up ! I must not forget, though, that he actually condescended to quit his pinnacle at times, and meet me in equality on the floor, and then I liked him, at the same time, perhaps, that the *rococo* of the disparagement was unconsciously recorded. It was not so pleasant

to see him in his pomp, 'when his eye measured the difference of our points of elevation,' or when he turned from me to *resume himself* as it were, and duly meet some 'mere carcass of greatness.' Heavens ! why should there be such scorpion-sting to mortal merit ? And how conditioned might the 'carcass' he met be ? Why, *as* a carcass—a carcass that, but for the salt it drew, would have putrefied, on the instant, black ! Ay, there were many such carcasses—carcasses of hard-hearted cruelty and oppression, carcasses of selfish vice and frivolous indifference, carcasses of ignorance, falsehood, vulgarity, and craft—and men like Blair would fawn upon them, did they but happen to be provided with the salt of office, title or pelf. How I admired the inequality of accident, and said to myself, Men are put upon the palm of fate, like pence upon the palm of the school-boy, and tossed, to fall into offices and place—*contingently*, as the latter on the ground ! How common now, was it not ? to find in a good position some nasty, superficial, stiff, presuming cur, absolutely without heart, or soul, or blood, or merit of any kind, supplied too, strangely enough, with a lady of a wife to suit, that was mightily genteel, an aristocratically exclusive—pitiable lick-spittle ! How common, too, to find even good people unconsciously ceremonious to such cads, as though they were angels from heaven, by gad !

Blair was better than that—I mean than that presuming, odious, pinchbeck of society. But, after all, what claims had he for the place he took ? How very gracious his thin vanity—Ha ! black but not white, green but not blue, red but not yellow, elevated strokes, nauseous ingredients, polish, embellish, relish,—it was as if the flat-iron of David Hume had come over him, and turned him off, with a fold and a gloss ! And Blair did not want, either, for others to keep him in countenance. Mr. Pope, says the one ; Mr. Hume, *even Mr. Hume*, says the other ; and they are very clean, correct, and dignified opposite each other ; and the ladies sit round the walls, and discuss their servants and their dresses ; and you have the pleasure of taking leave, by and by, a sufficiently important personage who has spent his evening in society ! At dinner, too, you have the opportunity of sitting well up, and talking shirt-fronts. Then the chance to say 'My lord,'

too. One is quite in a wonderful way when one says, 'My lord;' and 'My lord' is quite in a wonderful way when 'My lord' is said to him. And, after all, it is but rat to rat: they might easily let their tails down.

But it was about Dr. Blair I was thinking—well, he tells me that I have every reason to be pleased with it all, and that I must just go back to my place and be good—back to my place and plod in the mools, that is, while they, in their elegant manner, wheejee forenent each other over their claret! I heard it evened to me once that I had 'an authoritative energy of understanding;' but that's no the gear they want there. In a prime minister, perhaps, or a general—but in a ploughman authoritative energy of understanding only answers so long as it is to society so much unexpected tight-rope dancing. Anywhere in this world, indeed—generally—authoritative energy of understanding is not taken well; mostly ill rather, as a rebuke and an offence, something to be hated, snubbed, and suppressed. Eyes that can see—especially in an inferior, a ploughman—are a nuisance in society.

'In the midst of those employments which your situation will render proper,' says Dr. Blair—(carting dung, for instance!)—'you will not neglect, I hope, the cultivation of your genius.' Now, is not that grand? Be a ploughman, my man, for your expenses, down there, but also a genius for our amusement up here. The king's face gives grace, they say: society called me out: society ought to have considered what duty it had taken on itself. Once seen, and known, and acknowledged, I should have been placed and treated according to my quality. But, after all, such acknowledgment on their part, if there was such acknowledgment, bore with it always that it was an accident of the moment, and that I was, in effect, of another clay than they, to which they were not called upon to extend the rewards reserved for themselves.

Pah! between the condescension of the statelies there who cut me now, and the grovelling of the lick-spittles here who used to cut me, they are all bad. I am out of conceit with my species. I never thought any of them capable of much; but now that I know them to the marrow, there is not one of

them, d——n them, on whom I can depend. High life and low life, it is but the same thing, too. A band of school-boys has its permanent varieties, and they can be all classified and named. There is the dressy exquisite among them,—and the guzzler,—and the proud peat,—and the birky,—and there is the dull fool, and the comic fool,—and the coward by admission,—and the fighter by pretension,—and the empty pomposity,—and the hardened piece of brass. Well, just so is it among the doctors, and the lawyers, and the ministers, and the army-men, and the navy-men, and the men of the lords, and the men of the commons, and the princes in their palaces, and the kings and the emperors on their thrones. How the business of the earth gets managed at all tolerably—it is difficult to understand, but—God, God!—in what a welter of revolting corruption and infuriating injustice! This lesson is left however, that on all the grades men are all the same, and in the same way varied. He is but a fool, then, who would sigh to be, as it is called, *up*, when he can be much quieter, much less galled, much less molested, much more to himself, *down*. Still, after Edinburgh, I can never be the man I was. I am Burns now: the poison of celebrity is once for all within me; and I must be accordingly convulsed, accordingly goaded. How can I be expected to exhaust my body from the dawning of the day to the darkening of the night with at once the sorest and the commonest labours, and yet—cultivate my genius? Nay, here is a man—high in influence, too, with pensions, power, and place to bestow—that actually calls to me to be grateful for—want!

‘Then, to the want of worldly gear resigned,
Be grateful for the wealth of thy exhaustless mind!’

That is sheer impudence: it is easy for him to resign himself to want—in my person; but let him try it in his own. An exhaustless mind! is an exhaustless mind possible in an exhausted body? And it is off such garbage that I am expected to feel full, and be grateful. With a breath I could scatter these pigmies, and they expect me to bow down to them and worship. They expect me, while worn at the plough or the spade, to feel highly honoured and to doff my

broad bonnet to them, if they but cock their elbows at me from their driving boxes on the highways. May the devil damn me black, as Macbeth says ! Why, when two rats meet, should the one droop his tail, and the other cock his ? Are they not both rats ?

Let a man gather what he may, or call himself what he may, he can but fill his belly and cover his back, even like the rest of us. 'Patience ! where's the distance throws us back so far, but we may boldly speak in right, though proud oppression will not hear us ?' 'There's the respect that makes calamity of so long life !' The belly being filled, and the back being covered, the rest should be for intellect, but is it ? No : those who have superfluity will still coerce that superfluity into the service of sense, as gulosity and lust, as vanity, pride, malignity, and all bad passions that disgrace our nature. Intellect shall be nowhere—intellect shall be starved—not one penny shall be thrown to it—unless it minister as sense to the surplus that will be sense. It is in the element of this superfluity that the life of the world is plied : that bustle that we hear, what is it all about ? Man is what is noble in creation, yet the loud wheels of his business roar for gradations and distinctions the most odious and contemptible. What mere pretentious mock, and—haw, haw !—make-believe, our grand society. We have the labels of our dignity round our neck, and, with a stiff head, we wag them at one another—taking on a tone in the voice, by gad ! Good heavens ! and to reach this make-believe, men rack themselves all the best thirty or forty years of their lives, to the disappearance of life itself, and with ashes for fruit at the last—ashes for fruit when they sink heart-broken into the grave under the stony eyes of useless, drinking sons, and equally useless, dressing daughters !

But the bells jow the half-hour between the sermons, and I must bethink me that I am here on the ridge of life to call a council with myself in regard to the future. Well, I have to farm Ellisland, and—I will marry Jean. Yes, I will marry Jean. O, I have seen many, and as usual, they grew seraphs before me, and I was ready to worship them, and be theirs for ever, but—but—No : it is all nonsense ; Clarinda will never do as a wife for me. It is no for the man to say

no, and she is a fine woman, and I have been blowing myself into raptures. But—but—what is blown bursts, and that has burst. O, ay, great natures, congenial souls, equal spirits, sensibility, sympathy, and all that—it is all very well, but fine feelings *ben* 's no the wark *but*, and it's wark a farmer maun hae. Besides, she's no to be had—Jean I can have and ought to have, for, beyond all doubt, she has the best right to me. Nay, what's mair, she answers me best, and I like her best. Jean is subdued to my own quality, and she'll no bother me. She's young, and she's sweet, and she's handsome. She's nae fine leddy—she can fyle her fingers : she'll soop the flure, bile the kettle, and wash a sark. Besides, what is to become of her else, and has she not suffered enough already, poor lassie? And a' for me ! Jean, Jean, Jean, it's you I like, and it's you I'll marry ! And I'll go and do my best at Ellisland both as farmer and poet—Poet, poet, good Lord !—O, I am a grand poet. And now let me hame and act—I've thought enough.

SCENE 3.

Ellisland—Early Summer, 1789—BURNS with AINSLIE and JEAN.

(BURNS *speaks.*)

Sit ye there,—sit ye there, na. Man ! I'm blithe to see you. And you are hearty and well ? That's right, that's right. And you've come in good time to see us in our new house. Ah man, it's all right here—that's certain ; but it's all wrong where you come from. I was quite sick of it, the other day, when I saw you there, and glad to get home again. Lord, man ! Gin they were prospect-glasses, yon folks in Princes Street, to shoot themselves out and up at their ain pleasure ! But you—you're no like *them*. You are the ae best fallow in the world—the ae best frien that is left me. Man ! I'm glad to see you—Wife ! Jean ! send in the toddy. Good lord ! we'll hae a nicht o't. Whisky, man, the best you ever tasted—whisky frae my auld frien Glenconnar ; it has himself in it and it's as grushie as the very heart of him. Nane o' your water'd trash that's amaiest tasteless the lane o't, but a most liquid lump of solid excellence, with the virtue in

it of five or six waters—only four's eneugh—Ha! the water's fine and het. Here's to ye, Ainslie, your health, man, your gude health. and a hearty welcome to our new roof-tree, whilk I doubtna to be as strong as the bougars o' Tantallon. Od, man, you're the very man I wanted: I've got such a stomachful of speech, and I wanted you to pour it all out on. For there's nothing on earth I like better than a frien like you to whom I can say all that I have got to say. The relief and luxury of a full delivery—a revel of communication, a wassail and wallow, if you like, of communication—that's what I like. At times like this, Ainslie, I just feel as if I was a barrel turned upside down, wi' the very saul of me rinnin out at the bunghole. Now that's a joy I can only get wi' the like o' you. At Edinburgh the thing was impossible. If ever I wanted to speak there—really to speak, I had to mak my man fou, to say naething of mysel, or ever we could get sowthered, and by that time, the tither fellow was geyan often stoopit, and just grumphed. But you, it's just a God's pleasure to meet the like o' you. You're frienly; you're what I call a frien; you've blood in ye. But yon cauld-hearted curmudgeons in their deegnity—Lord, man, I just despise them. O ay!—O ay!

I kenned fine what wad be the upshot o't all. Wonder up to the ninth day, but the tenth day ice; and the cold indifference of *never saw you before* ever after. And what does it matter? If they do not want me, as little do I want them. I saw them all, and I know them all, and what was it to me to jaw yon jaw? What could I learn from them? What could they do for me? What was the good of it? This is nice, na—with a friend like you, this is enjoyment. But what enjoyment was yonder? A heap o' bad feelings rather. Out upon you, ye fools in the high places where misbegotten chance has perked you up—out upon you, off with you, and skulk through life in your native insignificance! Pride, affectation, and insipidity! And by the like o' that to be 'received'—with the insult of patronage and the humiliation of advice!

As I say, in your Princes Street, the other day, I just felt myself nobody; the people disgusted me, and I could not help muttering

Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you !

That I should be squeezed out of the way to let the carriage of some gaping idiot dash past, leaving me to scart the jaups out o' my cuffs ! Sma' pleasure it was, I assure you, to skulk in and out among them. And it was just as bad wi' them in their houses. The condescension, now, of stately, self-sufficient stupidity, or the insolence of upstart indifference that neglected my remark, and despised my person, while the folly of some shallow *title* was listened to deferentially and with grave respect ! Why, I ask, should one man better fare, and all men brithers ? Why should yon empty miscreant have the sceptre of power and the key of riches in his puny fists, while I—I lose appetite and heart at the success of the knave, as I sicken to loathing at the self-importance of the fool. Man, Ainslie, we are but miserable creatures—the elect with their riches and their honours (and their prudence and their wisdom, bless ye !)—and the neglected many, sold, blood and bone, to the insolence and the cruelty of these minions. As for me, I cry with Smollett,

'Thy spirit, independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye !
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky !'

That we should be expected to shrink from every dignity of man at the *word*—just the *word*, a *word*—'lord,' borne by some creature probably not half so well-made as ourselves ! It may be like Satan to say so, but like Satan—and he is my favourite hero—let it be : rather than tremble for subsistence before the indifferent face of some haughty fellow-worm, I would stalk a savage in the wilderness. My whole soul revolts at the idea of such necessities.—O, on the brazen foundation of integrity, to rear me up the frowning fortress of independence, and from its daring turrets bid defiance to all the storms of fate !

Man, I was dreadfully put about by such like feelings when I came here first—before the house was biggit and the wife brought hame, and while they were all strangers to me. I was insultingly taken in, now and then, by the small cunning of some small wretch, too small to be able to see a man ;

and then, like a fool—the d——d idiot that I was—I must be awkward among them, as if *ignorant*, and bashful, as if *inexperienced*. I was quite heartless at the task, and often felt such a coward in life that I should have ‘gladly laid me in my mother’s lap, and been at peace.’ But then—my wife and children! And so I had to go and take comfort on the neck of my auld mare Jenny Geddes, the only kenneed face beside me, the only frien I had. But why should I trouble you with all that? We’ll e’en hae anither jug, and turn the picture.

Ah man, to meet the like o’ you, a human being after my own heart—I get half mad; I positively feel a species of idolatry which comes on me like an inspiration, and I must rave—in rhyme or speech, as I do now. I have arms of love for the whole human race, man.

Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;
Ye whom the seeming good think sin to pity.

Ay man, I could drop tears even on the reprobate at the corner of the street, whose very soul is in the tinkle of a sixpence.

But softly, softly—as I say, let us turn the picture! Reform! what a reform would I make among the sons and daughters of men! I think of a stick whyles, and it gives me great satisfaction in my ain mind to lay about me with it—But where was I?—That’s no it—O ay, here it is!

I’m set up for life now, ye deil, and all is prosperous about me. I’ve got a farm o’ my ain, and I think I’ll manage it. It is just the thing for me—a ploughgang that I can work mysel; for it is to my ain industry I maun trust, and what it’ll mak, and no to time-bargains, or buying and selling on speculation. Then I have a good landlord, and it’s a most pleasant country, and we’re not owre far frae Dumfries; and so just everything promises. I’ve got a bit nice house o’ my ain biggin—you’ll see’t the morn, and what fine views we hae from the windows. The Nith underneath the scaur we’re pitched on, a noble river, clear as crystal, with bonnie banks, and holms behind the banks, and groves here and there, all rising and rising to the foot of the hills. Down the stream, that jinks out and in most captivately to the south and the

east, there is the Isle, historical and romantic, wi' an auld tower that's got a ghaist in it, and a kirkyaird no far off that's haunted. Up the stream are the beautiful grounds of the Friar's Carse, where I've liberty to walk and wander when I will; for he's a polite man Captain Riddel, and has given me a key. By the bye, that's the last thing I've done—what I wrote there. Here it is—ye maun hear it—I think ye'll like it.

Thou whom chance may hither lead ;
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.
Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost ;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.
Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy aim :
Ambition is a meteor gleam ;
Fame a restless, idle dream !
For the future be prepared,
Guard wherever thou can'st guard ;
But, thy utmost duly done,
Welcome what thou canst not shun.
Follies past, give thou to air,
Make their consequence thy care.
Keep the name of man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence with lowly heart
Him whose wondrous work thou art ;
Keep His goodness still in view,
Thy trust and thy example too.

Now, that's my experience, Ainslie, and that's my philosophy too, an I could but practise it. But, as I was saying, the future (and I aye look to the future somehow) seems pretty safe now, and I've got over the worst of it here : the folks about begin to ken me, and I see pretty well what I've got to do. Besides, man, should the worst come to the worst, I've got a gauger's commission in my pocket, and that's a forty or fifty pound a-year itsel. But I can aye mak a dairy-farm o' the place, and I've folk about me that understand that, and would manage it in my absence.

Man, how beautifully the spring comes in here ! Down by the river now, in some lown howe, just to stand in the

sun, with the sweet air about ye, watching your men—a state of bliss comes dirling all through you somehow, as if in a dream. For I am an important man now, Ainslie, looked up to by an entire household as the goodman and the master; and I've got me a family-Bible, man, and enter my weans' births into it, and gather my household duly to read it to them, with prayer and praise. And I've no fear now—I am as happy and contented as the day is long, contriving as you see, even to rhyme at times, and grateful to my rhymes that, in God's goodness, we have what we have—which, even should it come to the worst, will always be luxury to what either of us was born to. I have lived on eighteen pence a-week, man. And what was I before I went to Edinburgh? But it's no canny to think o' that, and we'll no speak o't; we'll no cloud with the gloom of the morning the smiles of the evening.

And I've got a wife o' my ain, man,—Jean, my darlin Jean: for I took thought at last, and did right there. How could I ever have had conscious peace in my own breast,—how could I ever have had unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God,—had I done otherwise? Cast out to the mercy of the elements, one who had suffered so much for me, whom I loved with such a long and deep-rooted feeling—her happiness or misery for life—no!—I dared not trifle with so sacred a deposit. For I hope, Ainslie, in spite of all that's come and gone, you believe and see that the foundation of me is the integrity of a man. I have the sincerest reverence for religion—Auld Clooty himsel canna doubt that, when he hears me tacklin wee Leezie in the kitchen, every Sunday-night, at her Shorter Carritch.

Ay, ay, Ainslie, we must believe in a God that made all things, in man's immaterial and immortal nature, in a world of weal or woe beyond the grave. O man, what I picture in the *Cottar's Saturday Night*! The heart weaned from earth, the soul affianced to its God, the correspondence fixed with heaven, the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn: that is the way to live—that is the way my father lived; and my eye reverts to it, and my heart, like the sea, swells back to it, now that I am myself the head of a household.

To mak a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

So farewell to you, ye light battalions that have no thought but to be up and out : I enlist for life into the heavies, who must first plod and contrive. But you have hardly seen hersel yet—Od man, we'll hae anither bowl, and we'll get her to come ben. O ay, I see you're thinkin about somebody else; but somebody else was no to be had, man, and this wasna a case to be played wi'. It's very fine, nae doubt, to have Sappho in the parlour, to read the books you read, and all that ; but Sappho sometimes brings her own drawbacks as well—requirements of her ain that fash ; expensive habits, caprice, affectation, besides that uppish screw-mouthed tattle that disgusts the very soul of me. No ; Sappho's no the wife for a farmer—Sappho's no the wife for Rab Burns. His wife must be something else—his wife must be just what he has got—nae fine leddy, but a sonsie lassie, that's as bonny as she's good, as modest and eident as she's placid and cheerful, and with a health that blooms as caller as the cheek of Aurora. She has the finest wood-note wild, too, I ever heard—But, good Lord, man, you must see her—I'm gettin fain to see her mysel. Wife ! gudewife ! Jean ! I say, Jean, we want some mair toddy—just anither—the last ! *The servants have gone to bed !*—Weel, you just gie the coal a bit chap yoursel—*O you've got warm water !* Ay Jean, that's like you—the best lassie in the world ! But sit doon, woman—gie's your company—that's Ainslie, my frien Ainslie—ye needna be frichted for him. There na ; that's worth the preein—just taste that ! Here, Jean, here's a wee drap for you, too—hoots ay !—tak it in your ain haun, and taste it ! And I want you to gie us ' My Nannie O '—Lord, Ainslie, you'll hear a pipe—she rises to B natural quite aff haun. Dinna be blate, na, up ye go, Jean ! (*Song.*)

Ay, you may weel clap your hauns, Ainslie. A finer singer—OR A FINER SONG—weel, we'll no praise oursels. But just another stave, wife !—Od, you mak me feel quite frisky—I'm so blithe to see you sittin there ! I could amaist sing mysel.

When first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldna tell what ailed me ;
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost failed me.

She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,
All grace does round her hover,
Ae look deprived me o' my heart,
And I became a lover.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay,
She's aye sae blithe and cheerie ;
She's aye sae bonny, blithe, and gay :
O gin I were her dearie !

There na, there na ! She's aye sae sweet, sae trim, sae tight—isna she, Ainslie ?—O gin I were her dearie—hoots, toots, Jean !—it's a' richt—what signifies a little daffin ?

I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By heaven and earth, I love thee !

It's true, Jean—it's true !—by heaven and earth I love thee ! Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean—*Time to go to bed*, say you ! And you're o' that opinion too, Ainslie ? Well, well, I'm a sponable character mysel noo—I must mind that, and keep good hours. Well, good night, Ainslie ! They're no very big, and they're plain, but ye'll hae a comfortable room, and a gude bed ; leave my wife alane for that ! As for me—come awa, Jean !—I'm just gaun aff to my honeymoon—(JEAN, saying 'daft fallow,' *puts her hand before his mouth, and leads him off, singing as much as her hand will allow him*)—

I hae a wife o' my ain,
I'll partake wi' naebody,
I'll tak cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to naebody !

AINSLIE. Od ! I think I maun hae a bit dauner out afore I turn in.

ACT V.

DUMFRIES AND THE END.

SCENE I.

BURNS, *in his last illness, speaks from his bed, to JEAN.*

BURNS. That has done me good, Jean—thanks, my lassie! I am easier already. You are a good wife to me, Jean; and you have borne much. *No say that!* but I will say that.—Well, that is true too: I really have *not* been placed like other folks. Most lives are but an indifferent smooth: mine has been under the harrow—poverty, and pain, and disrespect, not mended by a sun of favour at the last, but only detected and exposed in its own radical incurableness. Ay, it pleases me to dwell on it. There was a child's sunshine in the cottage by the road-side where I was born, doubtless; but in the farms that followed there was, even from my tenderest youth,—my very boyhood—a labour, always a labour that wore me to the dregs. And so, with this—even in my boyhood with this within me—I was to stand among my fellows on the earth, an ill-clothed, ill-fed, ill-set-up, clumsy, clouterly lout—a sulky, pouting, raging, awkward, unlicked lout—that never durst lift his eyes to either better-dressed boy or—still less—better-dressed girl. Then, for my cleverness, taken up by the rakehellly older ones, with whom I had no business to be, to make fun for them with my haivrel tongue, while they laughed and praised, or, as they took it into their head—d——n them!—snubbed me. And so it went on till at the last I was to all the well-regulated, respectable people, a dissolute, blasphemous, immoral blackguard—intensely hated, and intensely feared, if now no longer—unless by the weakest of them, the fools—despised. Then came the fire, the blaze, the conflagration—Edinburgh; and suddenly my ploughman carcase shone out in a preternatural light, with dukes, and lords, and the highest in the land, all kneeling to it. I was recognised—I was come to my own at last. Moment of moments! But my heart misgave me: I knew it would break up and vanish.

Ah, but it was bitter, all the same, when the time came, and the wheel that carried us all stopped to let *me* down, and then whirled merrily away again, leaving me behind, shut out into the dark for ever. Very benignantly, no doubt, they waved to me in parting, just to go back again, and—be happy! And that was all! I was worth no more than that! Dazzled with light, I must stumble back from it into the night again, and find my way as I could. I saw it all—I loathed and scorned it to the core—but I became wise. Ha, I cried, I have been bred to the plough, and am independent.—I took counsel with myself. And, Jean, Jean, I ask yourself—don't speak, don't speak!—was not the beginning good? I took you to that farm and made you the mistress of it. It promised well—I was like a patriarch of old with my man-servants and my maid-servants, my cattle and my stores. I was contented, and I could sow the tune to myself. Virtue's ways were pleasantness, I found. I read the big ha'-Bible to my household, led their devotions, and catechised them duly. I was pleased to be master among so many, and, keenly feeling all that a wife and family brought with them, I had no fear for the future. Even as against fortune herself, I had my excise-commission in my pocket. And did I not do my best? Jean, Jean, I defy you to say no—Well, that's enough—I was without blame there, and it was without my blame that it all fell through. The farm did not pay—it left nothing in hand, and, as usual, the seasons were against us. As for the farm itself, it had broom enough, and stones enough—stones! why, after a shower a field in it looked like a caus'ay. It had to be left, then; and it was with dry eyes we could quit the friend that was a patron, and the neighbours that were canting gossips, and knew as much of a rhinoceros as of a poet. It was the service of hell, to be obliged to listen to them; and the life—it was a drudgery beyond sufferance. These miry ridges and dirty dunghills—I should have been a rook at once, or a magpie, to grub among them. I was ill too. For weeks and weeks I was ill: the cursed hypochondria came and floored me at last. The excise was no better. Two hundred miles of hard riding every week, it killed my nags, it broke my arm, and it killed me—it would have

killed an elephant. We bude to go. And it was sad too—especially for the weans—to leave the caller air of the fields, and the gowans on the brae, and all the rough, fresh *nature* of a farm—for this !

And what has this done for us? I have got up in the morning as eident as any man, and minded my children's lessons, Latin and a',—revolving and resolving all earnest good things for them and ourselves. Then I spent the day—and what man more diligently? in the duties of my business. I seized, searched, surveyed, I noted and reported, I stamped leather, and I gauged ale-barrels ; and it all fagged and sickened me, as it would have fagged and sickened any man. How, then, could it be expected of me to act differently from another man? If other men must have rest and relief, why not I? After my day's work, and such a day's work, what heart could I be expected to have for writing poems? It was all in vain, I could not do it. I turned and turned the screw, but it would not bite ; I rattled and rattled the wheels, but they were locked, and would not run. To get a cue, indeed, the fag-end of some auld verse, and then to sowthe to it here and there—that was different ; but to sit down in the evening, and just begin work over again, that was impossible. And yet the aspiration was there, and the canker of the balk. Care sat for ever at my heart—hypochondria—apprehension—the sense as of something to be got that was not got, as of something to be done that was not done. But we needna speak of that even—I was just human like the lave, and no workman but must repair by relaxation of the evening the strain of the day.

Ah, and then, I was not as other men, but always in the fierce extreme of an Arctic Circle or a Torrid Zone. And *there*—the degradation of the day, the injustices of the day, the contumelies of the day, had all dropped from me, and I was free—free, and myself. I rose in my 'native hilarity,' I rose in my 'pride of observation and remark,' and throbbed like a star. I sat as upon a throne, and all men listened to me. It was life, victory, triumph, consummation, at last. It all led me wrong, doubtless ; and the very devils from hell prowled about my unguarded hour, craving for

me soul and body, and I was beset and entrapped. But—but—Well, well—can you forgive me, Jean?—Darling! you are good.

But it was not all owing to my own sociality, either. If I was not repelled by poverty, neither was I dazzled by greatness, and I galled its pride.—I dare sin, but I dare not lie. True I must be : it is only truth, the truth of manhood, and the truth of womanhood, that I honour or own. So I could not help speaking—by right of intellect speech was irrepressible to me—and I could not allow a lie—a lie of speech, or a lie of conduct, or a lie of character—let it be in what high places of the earth it might, to pass without an exposing mark upon it. And I became unendurable to them : they hated me. They knew that their gewgaws and trumpery, their big houses, their man-servants in plush, their gold and their silver, could not draw a look from me. It was not that I honoured. D——n the fellow, they said ; he must do something for his bread, and he will do nothing—he walks about among us all as if he were independent, by gad ! Ah, and it was so ; there was no man among them that I ever blenched to. In spite of their own selves, they subordinated themselves to me. No man of them all ever got the better of me—Well—there was that man of Urr, but it was all owing to his Latin, and he d——d to it !

But honour ! what is the worth of honour when we see it the sport of caprice, and stick to the coat of any poor creature the wind may blow it to ? Merit ! this is not a place for merit. He who sets out in life with the idea that the reward will be in the ratio of the desert will find himself most damnably mistaken. Let him do anything good, indeed ; and, to his astonishment and disgust, he will find it absolutely ignored till third-rate after third-rate has drawn the wages of it—ignored, commonly, is such work indeed, till he, the first-rate, who has produced it, has long gone where not a penny-piece can follow him. For what is called society consists, for the most part, of lucky schoolboys, say, whose fathers *have spoken for them*, and who live by intercepting the wages of work they have no part in, unless only the part of audacity, pretension, and fraud. That is the scramble of the world : work and merit at the bottom, but

the lightest on the top to enjoy all. Lose his head—the ploughman lose his head!—why the ploughman despised it! There was not a note in the whole gamut that he had not sounded and put at its worth. He knew *them*, and he knew himself; how could he have his head turned?

You see, Jean, I am back in Edinburgh again, and I think I see them as they *dismissed* me—and on what terms, for the future? The backs of the rank and file of greatness were turned on me for ever—that I had to see and accept, and with tolerable resignation; but how was it with my gracious patrons of the literary class? Why, they were to *be* my gracious patrons—my most condescending and benignant patrons, before whom, in return for such august and never-to-be-expected attention, prostrate humility of gratitude was, on the part of such highly-favoured, unlettered rusticity as mine, the single duty. From what a height, now, that letter of Blair's is written! I was in his eyes not a poet as other poets were—I was something outside and by-the-bye; and it was unsafe to commit himself to an opinion of me, especially in the way of praise. He never for a moment could allow himself a thought of me beside *any* English poet—any *regular*, so to speak. The Scotch told upon him at times, especially if it cut into the orthodox, and he could not help saying it was *clever*; but he said it with a grudge and a doubt. He could not come to a satisfactory account with himself in regard to it: he ended only by looking through his fingers at it, and encouraging me with but suggestive hesitancy and the most guarded admission. Nor was it very different with the rest. I was considerably gaped at certainly; but they could not place me, they could not name me. They could only say, as the great Edinburgh newspaper said, 'Burns, with propriety, has resumed the *flail*—but we hope he has not thrown away the quill.' It *hopes*, the great Edinburgh newspaper *hopes*; it really does not know what to *say*. 'Burns, the *Ayrshire Bard*, is now enjoying the sweets of retirement at his farm. Burns, in thus retiring, has acted wisely. Stephen Duck, the *Poetical Thresher*, by his ill-advised patrons, was made a parson. The poor man, hurried out of his proper element, found himself quite unhappy; became insane; and with his own

hands, it is said, ended his life.' You see, the inference is, that the same deplorable exit need not be feared for Burns—not from any difference of quality, mark you, but inasmuch as he, for his part, has not been hurried out of his proper element up to such a giddy height as only a parson can bear, and, resuming his flail, has *remained* a thresher. Burns, accordingly is, for his abnegation, equitably allowed the praise of wisdom and propriety; and he is graciously rewarded with the hope that he has not thrown away his quill, but remains a *poetical* thresher! Stephen Duck!—I was but a Stephen Duck! Burns was most probably a Duck; but a Duck that might be expected not to become *felo de se*, as he was judiciously left in his place to thresh, and not exalted into a parson to preach!

My very best and most admiring friends, now— There was Dr. Gregory, for example, how he crucified my lines to a wounded hare, treating me to the corrections he might offer a schoolboy, and promising me for reward, if I took the hint, an equality of excellence with, and the actual notice of— Mrs. Hunter! 'Revise them carefully, and polish them to the utmost—you may judge from the two last pieces of Mrs. Hunter's poetry that I gave you, how much correctness and high polish enhance the value of such compositions—give me another edition *much amended*, and I will send it to Mrs. Hunter—pray give me likewise for myself and Mrs. Hunter too, a copy—as *much amended as you please*—of—of the *Waterfowl on Loch Turit*. Let me see you when you come to town, and I will show you some more of Mrs. Hunter's poems.' What a reward! To see some more of Mrs. Hunter's poems—what a privilege and favour!—what an opportunity for Robert Burns, Ayrshire Ploughman and Poetical Thresher, to learn! Correctness and high polish, if I only understood that—if I could only write like Mrs. Hunter! And, of all things, the 'Waterfowl on Loch Turit' too! 'Occasional verses,' a thing for the moment, nothing! and intended to be nothing—it was for that I was to be asked, and it was that which, as a favourable specimen of me, was to be offered to Mrs. Hunter! Well, it was in English, and in regularly rhymed couplets! Album-writing, in short—that is what I am to aim at—that is what it is to be a poet!

Well may I 'curse the light I first surveyed, And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade.'

What has my reward been, even for the best I have done, —Tam o' Shanter, now?—One tells me on the strength of *it*, to do this, that, and the *other* something, and I shall eclipse—Matthew Prior! To another it is 'a pretty tale,' and, as having written it, I am 'the ingenious Mr. Robert Burns!' It was quite plain that, to the minds of all of them, I had not done the right thing yet—I was sadly wanting, it appeared, 'in correctness and high polish.' Blair cried Pope, Pope! Gregory Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Hunter! and it was what *they* wrote—what Pope wrote, what Mrs. Hunter wrote—I was expected to imitate. The very best said of me pointed to my 'humble and unlettered station,' called me a 'heaven-taught ploughman,' but opined that it would be the most ridiculous of absurdities to compare 'our rustic bard' with Shakespeare.

And so it would—the squeaks of a poor Scotch whistle—what are they beside those mighty English trumpet-tones? I fear—I fear that provincial commonness, provincial vulgarity, it may be, can never have a place in literature as literature. I know not how to place myself. I work but in a rude material, and yet—and yet—Well, if they did not know where to place my rhymes any more than I do myself, they might have seen what the man was, and at least given *him his* place. I could have led them all, had they but given me the truncheon! But no! I was to go back, and fill dung-carts, and—ha!—cultivate my genius—attain, that is, to correctness and high polish! In the event of such attainment, I was to understand I might return, from time to time, and lay my improvements at their feet, with the chance, if I were duly careful, of securing a renewal of their patronage; at all events, their weighty strictures and *impayable* amendments! A glorious prospect for the like of me, an Ayrshire ploughman! As if the Ayrshire ploughman were not in effect as well educated as any man among them—as if the Ayrshire ploughman did not see all in a lightning-flash—as if the Ayrshire ploughman could not carry himself as a man, and be a man—a *man*—a man anywhere—a man to man or men, be they college professors, or princes, or nobles, or just

who they might ! That was the curse of the thing—the ploughman must be a ploughman, a clown in corduroys, with a common, ill-cut, rough coat—an unawakened boor that could neither spell, nor sit down, nor rise up, nor walk nor talk, nor look like other mortals !—my frien, that ‘blate and lathefu’ scarce can weel behave !’

Ay, but I was Robert Burns to my own self, and *my* wares should not be even paid for : I would not write for money. O, Robert Burns had the pride of Lucifer ! And why should I publish again, or what should I publish again ? If it was as before, a little worse, perhaps, or even a little better, I but exposed myself to the mortification of a very much colder reception. Why, Scotch rhyme, since my own, had poured upon them in a deluge, and they might well be sick of it. If it was the elegant English they cried for, was I to go fawning to my approving patrons for a guinea, and be more sensibly humbled by the disappointment of the public ? No, no ! a second publication was all-impossible for me, unless, indeed, I fell on something that was neither as before, nor as they expected—a drama, say—or the Scotch words for the Scotch airs which have proved such a labour of love to me.

So, Jean, ye see, there returns ever the o’er-come of my story, What was I to do, and how was my life to be fixed ? I knew myself, and I knew my place, but neither by craft nor by stint could I make the fortune to suit ; and still I must do my duty in the world, and have time for my rhymes too. But it all failed—it all failed : thae cursed politics cam in at last to finish it. I was not to mingle in politics, forsooth—my business was to act, and not to think,—whatever might be concerned, it was for me to be silent and obedient ! Who was I that such inhibitions were to be dictated to me ? Had I not as precious a stake in my country’s welfare as the richest among them ? What of my boys ? Had they souls qualified to inhabit only the bodies of slaves ? What was their birth-right ? Should not my heart’s blood stream around in the attempt to defend it ? The world had arisen as one man and thrown the yoke from its neck—all the peoples of the earth stood up in brotherhood and shouted Liberty—the greatest event the world had ever seen had happened—and I, alone of all men, Robert Burns alone of

all men, was not to thrill to it ! *My* business was to stop my ears, and guage ale-barrels ! I to remain torpid, I who had writhed under the contumelious half-notice of wretches whom only accident made great—by heaven ! it was impossible. And I was an easy victim ; they had no difficulty with me.

Than I, no lonely hermit (placed
Where never human footstep traced)
Less fit to play the part :—

The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art.

I did not always carry dignity with me, somehow ; I could check familiarity, but I provoked it too. All my life, whatever ye may think, Jean, I have despised myself as a compound of sense and folly, and I have never been able to amend my wretched inferiority. In the end, between them and my own self, I felt forced to throw myself on my own self-will, and retreat, reckless, utterly in revolt, with defiant looks, defiant words, and even defiant indulgences—into an exile that was half my own. The poet, 'in naked feeling and in naked pride,' how otherwise can he be expected to act in a world that has proscribed him ? And so the enemy prevailed. I just managed to save myself from ruin, but all my hopes were blasted. Supervisorships, collectorships, competence, position, leisure, all the certainties of the future, collapsed at a touch like the background of a dream.

And now I lie here, a wreck, dying—and with a wife and family left to want, or the niggardly charity of the cold-hearted world I hate. O Jean, Jean, you are indeed forlorn ! There's Gilbert, ay, and the money he has, but I looked upon that as sacred—you'll no trouble him till the last.—*I may get better yet !* Ah me, lass, I doubt it. I am as weak as a woman's tear, but, O yes, I'll try the Brow—maybe the sea will mend me.

Along the solitary shore,
Where fleeting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye.

The sea was never far from me when I was young—when I

was young!—with my Rigs o' Barley, and my Mary Morrisons, and my Poor Mailies, and Rankine, and the Ronalds o' the Bennals, and all the rest of them. I lived then—what was worth the name of living, but since, existence has proved but a distempered dream, a dream I wish had never been. I have borne a name in the midst of it—true! but what is a name to God? Ay Jean, what are all the vanities of this world? The time was, Jean, that I was anxious and uneasy when I had any illness, and perhaps not much wrong with me; but now—now that—Well, I'll no say that,—but, O Jean, all my interest in this earth is gone, all my yearning is for another country, I am as calm as a hushed child. How the favourite verses of my youth return to me!

'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.'

'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.'

'For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

Ah Jean, the Bible—there is no book like the Bible! Put a quotation from the Bible in any one of them, the best of them, Shakespeare, Milton, and on the instant, even their gold is dulled into brass. Ah, it is a blessed book—the comfort it brings to the afflicted! It is the poor man's friend, and the rich man's warning. It is the cement of Society. In the Bible alone are there words that are as the words of God. In the Bible alone is there the wisdom, and the calm, and the balm, and the consolation of the other and the better world. Ah me, Jean, that is the truth at last—Fame is for the earth only; it is but an *ignis fatuus*, the snowfall in the river, a moment white, then gone for ever.

The hope of fame, of fame for ages, is to almost all—to altogether all in the end—an unsubstantial dream. But call it reality, what is it worth? Are the opinions of men in general of such validity that their praise—or their blame either—is of any consequence? How often is it not the case that the writer of the day who alone gets praise and privilege and power and help—whom alone the young imi-

tate, and the old honour—is but a shallow charlatan that, having robbed all his life some veritable immortal of his name, and his place, and his very wage, dies, like a mushroom, into sudden oblivion and nonentity at the last ! Blair, in Edinburgh, for example, perhaps the very weakest man within its walls, is yet tacitly elected into the seat of distribution ; and no man may resist his award. What sort of a tune can we expect in any interest, when such a pitch-pipe as that leads ?

In my day, there have been only two public funerals that I have seen. The first was for a piece of shallow folly—a cork that turned up in every froth.—fussing, elbowing, gesticulating,—as spurious a creature as ever God blew the breath of life into,—a mountebank,—a lean and slippered pantaloon, that felt his own weakness in such wise that he could only cover it or carry it off by throwing a somerset, from which his face emerged into yours with a grin and a grimace ;—or by goose-gobbling himself into imitation of a drunk man and the consequent raising of a half-laugh on the part of the company, to which it should be the means of introducing him—slidingly. The second public funeral I point to, was for the man whom—really and honestly—I believe to have been, morally and intellectually, the meanest human being I ever met—a man who entered your room on noiseless, rat-like, pit-a-pat feet—who came not straight up to you then, but, rat-like, turned sideways to present himself at last with shrugging shoulders, and tallowy smiles of the weakest deprecation—a man of mere small craft and pitiful chicane, but adroit to seize what show would for the moment tell, and perfectly irresistible in a flattering make-believe you smiled at, even as you yielded to it.

Think of it ! an entire population turned out, silent, hushed, awed, to witness the passing to the grave of the coffins of men like these—nay, monuments erected in our streets to men like these ! Ah—bah ! it is all nonsense, Jean,—it is of no use,—there is nothing in it,—nature is beautiful, and God's world is divine,—but man is a *lâche*, his world a hell. Draw the curtain, Jean—I'll sleep.

SCENE 2.

*Professor and Minister.*PROFESSOR *speaks.*

Ah! then Burns is dead. A great spirit, but mixed. His understanding was as a flash that searched: what a pity so little has come of it! What a man he was when he came to the Highlands—how he impressed the duke and the duchess, and even the young lords and ladies, the children! But, O the change, when, not so long ago, after eight years of a residence in England, I visited him here in Dumfries! I could not help doing that. He was not the man he had been: he seemed, somehow, every way emboldened. Though but a very subordinate officer, for example, in the excise department of government, he did not scruple to speak incautiously of his political superiors. Of course, I did not smile my approbation, and—that I must allow—he was easily repressed, easily repressed. But in the evening he came to us in our inn, and he was then—Ah!—even less interesting. He spoke as he liked, and—called for what he liked. His manner was forced, as if he laboured to speak to expectation. He praised and blamed always with such emphasis as did not admit of dissent. He drank freely, and boasted unnecessarily of the excesses and orgies in which he had participated. He quitted us at a late hour—three in the morning—utterly exhausted. He has left behind him some charming verses. Pity it is they are only Scotch. Peace be with him! he was a great spirit, and, for his circumstances, a man as remarkable as many. I wish you good day, Mr. Gray.

MINISTER (*solus*).

Well, well—but I daresay he means well, and is an accomplished professor, for all his fastidious finicality. Burns was easily repressed—and by him! Burns was forced in his speech that night—could not the gentleman see that Burns was simply out of heart with his company? He bragged of his excesses too—why what was that for, but to make, as Burns would have said, the prig's hair stand on end? He sat late, likewise, just to punish him. His emphasis, too,

it was but partly the awkwardness, and partly the defiance, of his humiliating and uncongenial position.

Burns could dine out, and dip as deep as the rest did. Burns could seek relief in his tap, and forget himself in company to an hour as late as the latest of them. Burns, with his name and his fame, might have been beset on an exceptional occasion. But exceptions only prove the rule. Burns was no drunkard, and Burns was not dissolute. Burns was affectionate; Burns was domestic; a better father I have never seen. How he loved his children, and tended them! How he thought of the world, and their future in it! And how seriously, in their regard, his duty rose up to him. How pretty to see them toddling with him—to see him, ever and anon, lifting them up to press the cool, soft, little cheek to his, to stroke the smooth little head, and press his lips to the innocent little mou'!

Burns, too, was as conscientious, prompt, punctual a servant as ever held a place. Burns abhorred debt—he abhorred extravagance. Burns lived in the hope of a future state; Burns lived under the fear and awe of God. It was the untoward circumstances that placed the double nature of the poet in a false position where it *flared*; but, fall as he might, he never ceased to be all ruth for the unfortunate—all love and admiration for the pure and the good.

From first to last his position was a false one. After Edinburgh, no corner of his whereabouts but—and in no true light—was open to the public eye. Faults!—yes, but what was his age when he died, and what might have been expected of him had he lived ten years longer? He was but careless in his integrity. I hesitate not to say it: his nature was sound at the core; his soul was the light of love for truth, indignant lightning at the wrong. His very life was a yearning for redress; he longed to gather the universe into his embrace, and wipe away all tears from all eyes. It was the very overwhelmingness of this sympathy that led him wrong. He gave himself instantaneously up, as he drew himself equally instantaneously back. His trust was infinite, and it could be infinitely abused. His speech, in keeping with his feeling, was the hyper-emphasis of the instant: no man but was either the best that ever God sent, or the worst

that ever the devil took. Capable of wilful waywardness when the child awoke in him, he was too easily won, too easily lost ; and he was open to the familiarity of all men, could his imagination but frame a pretext for it.

All that is much, and yet the rift of the whole nature is this :—Whatever the sincerity of his *self*-abasement, he was incapable of turning the cheek,—he knew not the meaning of the word humility ;—he never thoroughly realised it to himself that he was, in the true sense of the word a *sinner*—not in the true sense of the word, let his penitence at times be what it might. Had it been otherwise, he would have been a ripened, strengthened, and reflecting four-square man, and not, as he was, almost to the last, a lightly-moved and pliant boy. The sense of sin would have been as ballast in him, and given him to think. In peril of eternity, the need of a Redeemer felt would have softened and enriched him. His eyes might have then been opened to the divine significance of Christianity, and he might have recognised then in rapturous illumination, what supernatural virtue, what miraculous revelation of the inmost nature of God, of the very secret and soul of being, lay in the Coming of the Man Christ Jesus. But it was not to be :—awed by Revelation, he was yet puzzled by it, and had to flee to what, more or less, was only a religion of his own heart. *Quanta ingenia sint, tanti sunt*—here and hereafter—that became to him almost his Thirty-nine Articles, almost his Confession of Faith.

It is not for us to sorrow, or fear, or make appeal, or doubt the justice of the Judge in whose dread presence is now his awful stand ; but still we may suffer ourselves to dwell with consolation and joy on this, That Burns, even perhaps the most of all men, will, to the latest posterity, promote among his fellows the cause of causes, the cause of truth, and right, and gentleness,—the cause of humanity ! We, Scotch, above all, ought to recollect that his very voice—tender by turns and arch, simple or cutting-wise—was the very voice also of our old, battle-striding, Scottish reality. Farewell, my brother—farewell my brother and my master ! Had you but lived these ten years longer—had your position but been less hopelessly false !

NOTE.

THE CHARACTER OF BURNS.

FOR force and nature, Burns, as a poet, has never been surpassed. His art—as such, and predominatingly—was not precisely on the *lofty* scale; but still it was led by the spontaneous sense in him of a gracious and full-filled whole. At least, we would presume as much from his favourite laudation '*sonsie*.' *Sonsie!* The burden, as it would seem, suggested by the word, charmed him. In point of fact, we see that he could not but flame up ever to what face or figure in a '*lassie*' was '*sonsie*'—'sweet, complete.' This, then, we shall say, was the ideal that ruled Burns: it was his *genius*. A blur was intolerable to him: it must instantly collapse before him into the precision of a mountain-rift in the sun. And thus it is that his writing literally *lives*. His words—clear, crisp, swift, sure—come instantly home—*clink*, so to speak, at once to the quick. Even rhyme and rhythm, with him, disappear—enrichingly, as it were—into the single vitality that is alone felt. Inspiration *kythes* expression in Burns, as naturally as the earth grass. Never were there such sounds to seize the ear and cling to it, as those of his: they are mnemonical merely; they are Mnemosyne's own. The due pitch is taken at a breath; and a speech attained to, at once as it is in life. It is the intense soul of the poet achieves this,—that intense soul which, imbuing in the eager mordant of emotion and the fiery colours of imagination, all its keen perceptions and vivid intellections, strikes out, ever, with instant precision, the correspondent sign. Sentences there are in Burns as solid and sudden as a Bass Rock or an Ailsa Craig—nay, words, single words, of just such quality,—words as strong as granite, and as hard (and clear) as crystal to the teeth of time. In short, there is in Burns such ring—such living ring of reality, as,—in an equal simplicity of truth to nature,—is possessed, in this world, by no poet else.

Intensity, then, was, on the whole, the single source of all; but, specialising, may we not say that the springs of production in Burns were more particularly these: feeling, fancy, and understanding, together with the incorruptible loyalty and indomitable pride of a most honourable and fervent manhood? More particularly still, perhaps, Burns was emphatically *clever*,—he was notoriously and supremely clever; and (placed as he was), it belonged to him, as such, never to be found at a loss, never to be taken unawares, but to be prepared always with a '*swatch*' of his '*ingine*.' Accordingly, it was quite in keeping that he had provided himself with red chalk and a glazier's diamond. With the one, he scribbled on the backs of such rough and ready surfaces as posters, showbills, and the like,—to render them, as he said, '*now fit to be presented to a lady*;' and with the other, he glorified (or outraged) the window-glass of inns and the rummers of his friends. Possibly, we do not so very much admire the accomplishment; the *business* of it may repugn rather. Nevertheless, there can hardly be a question but that, to

both sides concerned, it was a main consideration. No degradation of poetry—or of genius—was, from either side, seen in it. On the contrary, not only by the bystanders, on the one part—the profane of chance, with whom, in his balked sympathies, he might be glad to hobnob at times,—but, almost certainly, by himself, it was regarded as the special authentication of his powers, the proper guarantee of his gifts. ‘Crambo-clink’ was to them the peculiar sleight of hand with which he was expected to astound everybody at a moment’s notice: ‘Crambo-clink’ was to his own self, it is hardly more possible to doubt, very much his laurel. But the desecration—for desecration it was—bore fruit, if, on the one side of its own, then of its opposite, on the other. For, deriving hence, as we must, his *graces before meat* and other such clinches (not to mention those unknown tokens of his art which are said to be current, but not in reputable hands), it is hence also—from that enormous practice and intense strain of effort—that we must, at least in some considerable part, derive, as well, the unparalleled *facility* of his general verse: ‘The words come skelpin, rank and file,’ he says, ‘amaist before I ken.’

But, with more special reference to character, it is important to bear in mind that, throughout his whole career (for even his eight closing years are only partially exceptive), Burns, whether as man or as poet, was, for the most part, to use his own words, ‘without an aim.’ Of the ambition of the world—unless at a rare moment when his eye might glisten with the sense of his own superiority and of the possibilities that lay in it—he had literally none. Unlike Scott, who, with such self-complacent modesty, can never cease explaining, and apologising, and anxiously impressing upon us this, that, even when it may appear he has neglected his profession, and is only wasting his time, on rhymes and riddles for children, he has really not done so, and is not by any means forgetful of the main chance, but, on the contrary, after having intrenched, and inwalled, and provisioned himself with considerable forecast, in a fortalice of the law itself, he is now only turning into account rather, that ‘leisure’ from his ‘graver cares’ which is simply unavoidable, and actually introducing into literature—into poetry itself—the prudential considerations of the sober head of a house and responsible father of a family—Unlike the pawky Scott, Burns, we say, not only loathed the idea of inspiration for the market, but, though really provident of his pocket, never, at any time, it can hardly be said, made money an aim, even in living. It was his faith

‘That thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
“The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate’er he be,
‘Tis he fulfils great Nature’s plan,
And none but he!”’

It was only at the last, perhaps, indeed, that he had learned the nullity of this, his boyish illusion—the certainty that it was precisely the ‘social, friendly, honest man’ for whom there is no place here. As we see him in his career generally, he has no object but

to live. He is not born for 'the bustle of the busy' or 'the flutter of the gay.' He would live only,—as a tree in the air, as a flower in the sun, as an unmastered steed on the prairies, that snorts the foam over its head. Nevertheless, it is not alone, but among his kind he would live—naturally, warmly, rapturously, among these good fellows, and under the eyes of these bonnie sweet lassies. So to live and love—that is enough for him; and he is contented with his place among them. They know he is clever; they know he can speak: he is Rab the Rhymer, rantin Robin.

There were implied in all that, too, the need of constant distinction and the greed of instant fruition. The craving ever for the actuality of a full-filling experience—this largely it was that was the source of his melancholies, and convivialities, and even conquests of love. Curiosity and *maistrie*—'native hilarity and the pride of observation and remark'—were perpetual goads to him. He must be here, he must be there; see this, see that. It was an irresistible temptation to him, as the ways of country life were, to win—with hardly expectation of the end—this and the other advancing favour. Much arose from this too, that, from the very beginning, he had been misplaced and misused. What was that coarse and imperfect diet—what that premature and exhausting toil of an all-too willing and precocious boy, who, 'though forfoughten sair enough, was unco proud to learn?' What seeds must have been sown in these ways that could feed themselves afterwards only in indulgence and excess! The wonder perhaps is that, after such experiences, he was as he was. He perplexes himself at times, in these young years—and it is specially interesting to watch the troubles of the literary nature here—with the difference of what he is in himself, and of what he is to others in this and the other disparaging externality; but, with the full light of day let in, as is unavoidable, on the reality of his place, and necessarily disabused thus of his all-boundless expectation, he will still keep an honest manly heart, and play an honest manly part. Indignant at the wrong, and with nought in his future but the sick heart, sore joints, and soiled wings of ceaseless, hopeless, thankless labour, he will scorn favour and abhor debt. But pride to *his* inferiors there shall be none. For them, too, there seethes within him the fierce sense of the social wrong—of the injustice, of the cold indifference and barbarous brutality of a cruel and self-pampering world. To them he will be loving, helpful, kindly equal. He despises—utterly despises meanness; but he is infinitely soft to what is weak, gentle, suffering, or confiding. He has a warm side for the very beasts of the field, and almost a tender foot for the grass he treads. Unbounded goodwill, unbounded goodwill as it were, *simpliciter* and at once, just to the light and air of heaven—that is the soul of the poet,—that is the soul of Robert Burns! He walks in trust of the goodness over him, and is warm with the hope of final redress. He will act as he feels,—assured that his integrity will abide,—not fearing that, in meaning, he can ever prove false.

But, in this boundless sense of himself, as well as in that boundlessness of his proximate trust in others, he is incontinent of himself, and lavishes himself abroad in weakness. He can get love, but—to

his unconcealed chagrin—never respect. He thinks of his ‘garrulousness’ with remorse ; and, ever and anon, this ‘*lapsus linguae*’ and that ‘*lapsus linguae*’ recur to him with a shudder. The false gratification that was warm in the present, he could not always sacrifice to the true duty that was cold in the future. That the clever man could become coarse, the greedy soul reckless, especially after work, and, more especially, after the indignities and drudgery of *his* work—there is no room left for surprise. The surprise rather is this, that in such circumstances, and with only desultoriness allowed him, the very latest fruit of the poet was the natural purity of those dewdrops of song. Nay, anxiously reviewing all, anxiously revolving all,—sifting, weighing, separating,—ought not this indeed to be the surprise, that, dying so young, and with so much to hinder, so little to promote, he yet left behind him such amplitude, and maturity, and dignity of product ?



SAVED LEAVES.





SAVED LEAVES.

THE NOVELIST AND THE MILLINER.*

NOT willingly we speak to you, you thin, wry-shouldered Milliner—red-eyed and angular—much though you love us. No! not all the deep, devoted, strong affection that you have for us can ever lessen or destroy the grudge we bear you!

What! at shut of even and of shop—when work is done—when tired needles rest in pocket-books, their shorn plumes drooping from their glittering crests—when back-stitch and base stitch, splay-seam, and over-seam, cuffs, and ruffs, and muffs, and puffs, spencers and stomachers, are forgotten quite—when skirts and bodies, mantles, frocks, pelisses, finished or unfinished, thrust into half-open drawers, drooping from bed-post and from window-shutter, helpless over chairs, seated sinkingly beneath the table or upon, are all unthought of and unseen—when chintzes, muslins, silks, satins, and satinets, —when old-maid bombazette, and more old-maiden bombazine, and even the young good looks of Indiana, mousseline de laine, and Saxony, are in vain for you;—no brittle thread, a fret—no needle, intolerant of the same, pangs of vexation and weariness of wrist—no sudden rent to take the breath away—no wrong stitch, seen at the millionth, any more a heart-break—no Lady Jane's body joined to Lady T.'s skirts, and no Lady G.'s riding dress, all puffed and plaited, lined and twined, finished perfect and complete, but wrong side outermost, despair and syncope!—What! when all these blessed

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events have taken place—when this whole painful, vulgar world of clippings and cuttings, paper shapes and paper patterns, broken needles, ends of thread, scattered pins and empty bobbins, has sunk to you ; extinguished, like the sun, in night and after hours—sit you not reading by the light of those few red cinders, now fast blackening a-top, and momentarily sinking closer and more close, jostling each other and murmuring ? Sit you not there, barely supported on the edge of your receding chair, with quivering feet upon the fender ? Sit you not there, wide-kneed o'er the grate, unseen, at ease—with stooped head, flushed cheek, and glittering eye—turning so eager-rapid, with that yellow, needle-eaten finger, our reddened, fair-marg'd pages, curling and crumpling within their cracking, *gizened* boards ? Sit you not there, we ask, absorbed—abstracted—swallowed up in wonder and delight ; heeding nothing—seeing nothing—but the fair Elysian world we give you, there to wander in, till even odours of happy Arabia—perfumes of burning worsted—(for indeed, the flannel petticoat *will* take on process of eremacausis—slow combustion) can hardly bring you to your dim room and drooping skirts again ! And more ; the fire extinguished (by the laying-on of hands) and the fright allayed, sink you not into your chair again ? Seek you not eagerly to renew acquaintance with that same fair Elysian world ? Strive you not to execute the strange, mysterious rites, whereby accomplishment of that is had ? But alas ! do not the few red cinders—now still fewer and less red—refuse to hold for you the lamp whereby to see the talismanic scroll ; whereby to read the letters of that magic cabala of ours which opes the gates to these enchantments ? In wrathful-wise seize you not the poker then ? Stir you not up the few red cinders, nervously, into hectic flushes—smiles, but harbingers of death—or, at best, into fitful, momentary gleams, which can but seem to you sneers of malign derision, ape-like mockery ; as, for one instant, playing with you, they give to sight the mystical inscriptions, then snatch them back to night again ?

Dash you not up then, passionately, in sudden burst of galled vexation, paroxysm of fret abruptly yielded to ? Count you not, with hurried, shivering feverishness, how many

chapters you have yet to read before the end may come? Dash you not down again, in dogged self-will, stooped head and flushed cheek placed defiantly almost on the very bars, resolute to master, ere the night shall end, our dear third volume? Sentence after sentence, fruitlessly, strain you not on, desperately, frantically, in the mad attempt? Till at length, completely vanquished, wholly tamed, the breath of unwilling resignation issuing relievingly from the chest, with sore eyes, hair burning hot upon the brow, you find yourself compelled, in exhausted hopelessness—heart-broken even—to shut for the night.

And then, as you sit a good half hour yet, fall you not into the pleasant, pleasant reverie? In dream become you not the Lady fair you lately read of? See you not yourself wending forth from that high castle-gate, while, stooping gallantly, rides beside you that stately knight,—all clad in steel, but helmet off, and black curls tossing in the breeze, gazing so rapturously on you there, maiden-modest, in your cotton-velvet dress, mounted on milk-white palfrey, with your pinchbeck locket hanging from your neck by its watered ribbon gracefully, and the gilt leather card-case, which a friend bestowed, just innocently peeping from your lovely hand?

The scene changing, are you not assailed and carried off by livid scowling robbers, mysteriously silent and interesting? Pass you not through a whole world of adventure, a thousand perils, a thousand wonders,—deep defiles, mountains, rocks, and chestnut-trees,—setting suns, shadows and moonlight,—caves, castles, trap-doors, secret passages, sliding panels, daggers, lamps, and oratories,—one savage butcher-robber, with a bull-neck and bushy eyebrows,—one mild and milky—which latter befriends—secret signs, looks, and scraps of comfort—escape planned, effected—cottage,—old woman,—bread and milk—pursued, overtaken—robbers without cottage,—awful suspense,—little incidents, and *such* dialogues!—discovered—butcher-robber slays milky one—led back in triumph; in short, a whole host of men, all scowling, stamping, tearing, struggling and fighting for the single poor *you*, like a herd of black bulls for the one white heifer; till, at last, rescued by own brave knight—his helmet

on this time for variety—kisses and softnesses—separated again—harsh sire, cruel uncle—convented—but, finally, banns of marriage proclaimed three times on one Sunday—married in pale blue satin, trimmed with blonde; splendid wedding-supper—Maggy Sharp and Mary Young invited just to see—gorgeous bridal-bed—three sons and three daughters, and a long life of health, wealth, and happiness!

Or, the vision altering its shape, have you not gone to that dear, native country town, to visit your poor old parents? Chances there not to be a ball while you are there—some charity one—in which are mingled aristocrats from the castle, and respectables from the town? Does it not happen that you go thither, and that my Lord Underjaw, lord of the neighbouring manor, sees you? Is he not smitten with your pallid beauty, mild, silent, pale face? Does he not eagerly ask, whisperingly, 'Who is the pale lady in the blue?' Do not the eyes and the lorgnettes of the aristocrats turn at once and with a bustle towards you? Ah! that pale face classical; the loveliest lady there may never hope to match it. Are they not amazed, chagrined, enraged to think that a mere country-girl should thus outshine them? Intolerable! And that my Lord Underjaw should so evidently be taken with her! Do not their crops swell out big and red against you, not without utterance, like a flock of provoked turkeys? Still do not my Lord's eyes follow you the whole night over? Nay, seems he not once as if he would approach—speak, ask you to dance with him? But does he not command himself? Ah! with what thoughts go you not home, of dukes, and lords, and pale ladies in the blue.

Well, on the following morning, while you chance to be in Mrs. B.'s shop, drops not my lord in to purchase something? Seeks he not occasion to lengthen out his visit, ever recollecting some new want he had? Stands he not gazing at you? And you, behind the chair there, are you not looking down, making all manner of awkward motions, drawing all manner of strange figures on the ground with the toe of one foot? But ever and anon cast you not up your eyes on him with sudden, furtive, seeming-artless glances, half-consciously, half-modestly—such glances as tug strangely at the thrilling heart-strings? Goes he not away at length as in

a dream, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, unconscious of existence, thinking only of you, lost in wonder that the like should be? Does he not contrive to follow you again, and yet again, into the same place, ever finding new occasion to return? Are there not conversations now, longer or shorter? At length, begins he not to praise, to give expression to the wonder and the love wherewith you have possessed him? Venture you not timidly to call it flattery? Seem you not to think, less or more directly, to hint even, that such words from him can only point to wickedness? But is he not so respectful? Surely he is filled with genuine love, if ever man was! By and by, comes he not accidentally on you in your walk one day? Is not the accident repeated? At length, are you not seen publicly to walk together? Is not every woman's tongue, within the borough and beyond, eloquent on the topic, never tired of wagging on it? What a hum arises! The whole wasp-hive roused, from the sunk floor to the attics! You are become the centre of three thousand staring eyes, the pivot of the waggings of three thousand envious tongues. What a flutter, and a bustle, and a spite it is! How your own little heart goes throbbing, half-fearingly, half-hopingly; and your own little head goes proudly tossing in answer to a thousand vulgar lookings of the eye, and shakings of the head, and outspoken utterances! How it all goes on simmering, and churming, and yammering around you! while you, firm in the love of that high man, and sure of yourself, bear the brunt of it all bravely, though not without struggles and misgivings. But, on the whole, does it not drive you closer to him? Grow you not more and more intimate? Grow you not more and more into love? Ah! he is so noble, and so good, so kind, so gentle, and so wise, and loves you so! What a gush of tenderness comes over you, melting your whole soul! you feel as if your bosom were the only place to lay such jewel in.

At length he makes proposals — dishonourable ones. Haughtily, scornfully, they are repulsed at once. How abjectly, how passionately he supplicates for pardon, supplicates on his bended knees! At length, though wrung with agony, thunder-stricken, shame-stricken, yet gradually

soothed by his entreaties, and feeling him, indeed after all, still the nearest, still the dearest, still the only one to whom you can look for support and sympathy—sit you not on the ground in a passion of bitter, bitter tears, wringing his hand and sobbing out convulsively that ‘you knew, you knew you were but a poor poor country girl, born to drudgery and misery; that you knew, you knew you were not for him; that you deserved it all?’ Till does he not seem as if he would cry too, and strives he not to soothe you so?—‘He was only trying you, only trying you; he had no intention.’ And, at length, are you not reconciled?

By-and-by, deceived, misled, tempted by the softness he has seen, and suspecting he has been hardly bold enough, he repeats his wish. Ah! does not the spirit of ten thousand empresses heave within you? In what imperial dignity and scorn you turn from him, hearing not his words, his fervent entreaties to be heard; you reach your home. Oh, the bitterness of your abasement! How you are crushed to the earth! How you would fain hide yourself in the earth! The shame!—the shame! your weak simplicity jeered and laughed at! A country girl fit for a lord! That you should have been gulled, mocked, scoffed at! That you should not have seen it all!—that you should have been blind to it all! O, the weak, weak fool; the bitter, bitter, deep abasement; the bitter prostration beneath the punishment; the acknowledgment that you deserved it all! But, by-and-by, does not the tempest lull?—are there not tears of love, regrets, hopes? Come there not letters—passionate appeals? Finally, is there not a meeting, half by accident? How the first coldness and aloofness melts, thaws, and vanishes; and the reconciliation becomes complete; for now he makes honourable proposals.

Then come the preparations for marriage. And now, how the envy deepens and the hum increases. But are there not some who cringe, and fawn, and flatter? With what bitter satisfaction do you not receive and watch them? Then is there the wedding, a very blaze of splendours. Yet do you not carry it all with a sort of proud humility? How kind you are to your poor old parents! You are never tired of hearing comforts on them. You cannot resist, however,

driving into the town, in your little model of a phaeton, with the two milk-white ponies, having, as the sole ornament about you, one stately feather in your bonnet, bending at the top gracefully, proudly enjoying the gazes and remarks of all observers. Neither can you help stopping at the door of old Presume's hotel, to send in your footman, patronisingly, with an order for a few casks of porter, and an invitation to your old intimate, half-friend, half-foe, rattling, vulgar Mary Presume, who stands galled and gaping at the bar, that you will be glad to see her at the Castle. Nay,—worse than this, and weaker still,—hardly repressing something like malicious triumph struggling up within you, can you resist calling condescendingly on your best friend Maggy, whose marriage tea-set, dining-tables, crystal, and evening parties used to spite you so?

Well, is not she too invited to the Castle? and do not they both come? With what inward chuckling ecstasy, boiling up almost incapable of being repressed; ready at a touch to explode and scatter all—nay, does it not explode when, on examining your London toilette-case, you cannot help presenting Mary with a Paris bottle of perfume? But with what outward coolness, *nonchalance*—as if they were all common matters, things of course—you take them from the drawing-room to the scullery, from the garret to the cellar, watching, with such fierce keenness of enjoyment, their wonder, amazement, envy; but seemingly not watching, not noticing at all. Ah, yes; it is all pure ecstasy—ecstasy, not the less exquisite for being spiced with a little, half-malignant feeling of victory and triumph! And how can they be else than amazed, wonder-stricken, envious? Is it not all tinselled footmen, ivory, ebony, or'molu, china; such as a Queen might—But the watchman under your window, drowsily snuffing out half-past two, breaks the china, and warns you to your bed.

Ah! and then fondly deluding yourself for the millionth time, slip you not beneath the pillow our dear third volume, with the extravagant determination that you will awake betimes and finish it? But, alas! you do but wake to find you have overslept yourself. Languid, worn out, exhausted—even more so than at laying-by of needle on the night

before—to you slumber hath brought no rest, repose no blessing. You lie in sort of bitter-sweet prostration ; sleepy, sleepy, but nervously incapable of sleep. You cannot rise ; it seems as if some strange affinity—attraction—were glueing you to the bed beneath ; as if some electric cloak were clinging to your skin ; as if a weight were laid subduingly upon you, chaining you down there, half willingly, half unwillingly, and when, at length, with sudden effort of the will, you wrench those chains in twain and spring upon the floor, go you not about your little processes of dress drowsily and sulkily, cold and shivering, snuffing, croaking, whimpering, empty of hope, heartless, comfortless, miserable ? For, to you, as often virtually to all of us, again has this life become a broken loop, a burst button-hole ; or if not burst, not broken,—to the loop there is no hook ; to the button-hole, no button.

Well, even then, amid the morning disarray of bed and bed-appendages, let but our dear third volume, gliding from its lurking-place, attract your eye,—with what eagerness, half wilfully yet half remorsefully, you spring to it,—seize it,—read from it ! You read, and lo ! the sorcerer has waved his wand. Despite some little qualms that weigh unseen, yet not unfelt, upon your breast, prompting that unconscious knocking of the hand at the door of your breast-bone,—the weariness, the pains, the drudgeries of life, fall from your spirit, you are free once more—free, clear, and joyous ; again within the crystal battlements ; again wandering in that fair Elysian world—treading a new earth—breathing a new air—living a new life. And shall we—we who make all these things so for you—we, by whose victorious toil it is that thus there is set down for you, even in the very midst of this poor, painful, vulgar, week-day world, a faëry land of warmth, and balm, and happiness, wherein is refuge ever, and a place for you ;—we, who have endured long agonies of labour and privation, thus to secure for you a magic treasure—an Aladdin-lamp, whereon you need but look to call up genii to your bidding—shall we, who alone below are as sun, and moon, and stars, and light, and warmth to you ; as a fond mother's bosom for you to nestle in, to lay your poor, wearied, lacerated, palpitating heart upon, and be so happy—shall we

be all this and do all this for you, and shall our highest recompense—our best reward—our very utmost fee—be some paltry three-pence, doled out weekly to the circulating library, not one thousandth part of which e'er reaches us besides? No, no ; we never can away with it ! not all the deep, devoted, strong affection that you have for us, can ever lessen or destroy the grudge we bear you !

VENETIAN MADELINE.

Ah pride ! Ah pomp palatial !

Ah Venice ! tranced in wave and air :

Charm-lustred air purpureal ;

Wave, limpid-lifting up the marbled stair !

A lady and a balcony,

A white arm on the balustrade :

No gondola but lags to see

The dream-like beauty of the dreaming maid,—

So plain the full eye looks at them,

At gondolier and cavalier ;

So plain the sweet mouth smiles at them,

Strangers that pass so far and yet so near.

Half-drawn, the crimson curtains sway,

Caught by their golden-tasselled bond ;

While ivory and ebony

Fling pomp and splendour from the room beyond.

But purer from the crystal charm

Of down-dropt waters tearfully,

Balcony, maid, and snowy arm

Reel in the brimming lucid skyeyly.

In billowy burst from forth the room,

Hark din, hark hum of merriment,

With ring of laughter, flung like foam
On the summed wave of step, and tramp, and instrument!

Ah, this must be a marriage feast !
The bride shall be that lady fair
Who heeds it not, but dreams, I wist,
Rocked on a thought—away, far other where.

But ' Madeline ! ho, Madeline !
Come strike with us the glad guitar,
What, Madeline ! Ho Madeline !
Hist maid ! Nor dream there tranced like a star.'

Crimson and croaking in his wine,
Thus calls the bluff sire from the hum,
On Madeline, his Madeline ;
And Madeline returns, ' I come, I come !'

' I come, I come !' lutes Madeline—
' I come, I come ;' but dreams the more,
Heeding nor voice, nor tabourine,
Nor beat of timeful feet upon the floor.

But at the curtain's inner line,
A louring face, continually
Watches, with glances viperine,
The maiden and the water jealously.

A ragged beard that fain must thank
Some eleemosynary moles ;
The figure of a mountebank ;
Puff-breath'd, snag-toothed, loose-legged, with shuffle
soles :

'Tis Gobbo of the money bags,
Who sneered he'd *buy* himself a wife ;
He eyes each gondola that lags—
But she sees not—he, cruel, grasps his knife.

Now Sol, into the west back-strode,
As fronting foemen royally.

Tramples the crimson-stained cloud
With glance of golden-crowned mockery.

His glove, his jewelled glove seems flung,
Imperial, on the long canal,
Burning rich blazonries among,
That flicker up each sculpted pedestal.

Hark note, hark lilt of flageolet,
And swift from glory of the west,
See glide a mystic gondolet,
With long-haired gallant in his bravery drest.

For her, for her that gondolet,
For her, for her that stately knight !
Her fingers clutch the parapet
In hope, in fear—and now—Ah, wild delight—

A foot on thwart, a hand on stone,
Her knight is in the balcony ;
One loving arm around her thrown,
He lifts her to the balustrade—Ah see !

A snake has slid into his breast,
A knife ; he staggers—falls—No ! she
Already to the boat is passed :
With laughing rattle of his cuirass, he

Has seized the dwarf, seized the small man,
And pitched him to the surging line
Of guests—then leaped ! A partisan
Has pushed. ‘ Ah Madeline ! Oh Madeline ! ’

Shrieks, livid, in the balcony,
Her sire—shrieks wild, and tears his hair.
But fiercely, swiftly, to the sea
Hurries the boat. A ship receives the pair.

She shakes into the breeze her sails,
She daffs the waters in her might,
And long before pursuit avails,
Has disappeared in silence of the night.

But they came back—came back to plead
With the bluff sire, and gained his grace—
Nay, blessings on the very deed
Had seemed past pardon, and a fault in race.

And thus it was they fled, these two ;
But from them rose a noble line
Of gentle women, warriors true,
To voice and vaunt Venetian Madeline.*

THE NOVEL BLOWERS;†

OR,

HOT-PRESSED HEROES.

LONG, irregular, unlicked juvenal ! shall we not laugh to meet you on the street ; marching along with those majestic strides ; listening so pleasedly to the manly tread of your thin, loose limbs ; and, ever and anon, squaring the symmetrical shoulders, as you fancy to yourself the whispers of the ladies about that haughty curl of lip, that audacious devil's eye, that interesting bull-neck, those whipcord sinews, that iron constitution, all bone and muscle, suffering no particle of fat, and capable of watching, fasting, all-endurance ? In decorous handkerchief shall we not smother our side-stitching ecstasies, seeing you at church laden—though, to be sure, bearing up beneath the burden bravely and modestly enough—laden with the eyes of that fair damsel, a few pews from you, who chances to be intently envying a better bonnet than her own beyond you ? At theatre too, how are our diaphragms convulsed, watching the modest fortitude where-with you do possess yourself, while lovely ladies in a side-box never take their eyes from you ; while beautiful girls in the pit, seated in the seat before you, turn ever and anon to look at you ; while even the fairy dancing-women, in their

* 1849 is the date of the best of this.

† From *Douglas Jerrold's Magazine*, for May 1845.

curt chemises, smile to you from behind the footlights, and with one pretty finger beckon you to the side scenes ! But oh ! to get you on shipboard—or rather on the deck of some river-plying steamboat ! Is it not laughter for the very gods—sport for great Jove himself—to see you there, pacing heroically along and across, now larboard, now starboard, in full expectance of some huge adventure ? But let us ‘begin with the beginning !’—

The quay is all alive with bustle, and not less the steamer there, snarling through its pavonic throat. With bursting cheeks, the boy at the stern twangs his brass trumpet. By the gangway, from quay to paddlebox, stand the red-faced captain, with his unspotted boots, and the short, round steward in his pumps and trim blue jacket. Coals are wheeling in ; luggage throwing down ; friends shaking hands with friends ; porters wiping their oily brows, standing with deferential hat before their purse-unbuttoning employers. Excited new arrivals bustle, shifting their little traps now here, now there, chatting vivaciously : people and articles of all sorts weave with each other an inextricable web of movement ; and, above all, the hot summer sun shines through the city smoke. Groups of well-dressed persons throng the after-deck : well-paunched, many-sealed citizens, with their wives and families ; dandified eldest sons, already choosing from the big cigar-case ; misses, just escaped from boarding-school, adjusting into efficient focus veils, shawls, and pocket-handkerchiefs ; little girls holding on by mama or papa ; little boys with straw hats and nankin pelisses, stooping to little lap-dogs ; larger boys twisting at the steering wheel.

The bell has sounded thrice ; and the eager voyagers are even sick at heart with impatience for the start, which seems as if it would never come. At length, a late arrival hurrying on board, all perspiration, flushed face, and beating heart,—the gangway is pushed off, lifting the load from every breast. Boom—bounce ! goes the engine. Thereat raising their heavy lids, and only half awake, the sulky paddles plash—plash lazily. The vessel swims. Sailors running with ropes, passing them from hand to hand round rigging, now coil them dripping from the river. The stone quay, with its line of faces—of hand-waving friends, of

grudging idlers, of rope-ribanded and ticket-starred porters—glides from before you. On tramps the steamer. Away, away! past factories and dockyards—past mangy banks with children shouting on them—past boys in skiffs, pulling out eager to the waves—past slip-docks (there are men working on a hull; you see the hammer fall—soundless—but with an echo). On, on the steamer scours, between stone embankments, here and there undermined, and irregularly washed into the stream. Before her course the waters leave dry their banks to glide beneath the graceful undulation that, falling sidelong from the bows, leaps ever joyously ashore, sparkling and splashing among the stones, like delirious dogs bounding and barking before a carriage. The tawny billows, boiling up from behind the paddle-shower, in double row, divided by the swirling furrow of the keel, roll far behind in gradual subsidence. The spray sparkles. The sun shines warmly on gay parasols and gayer dresses. Already are the articulations firmer, the cheeks fresher, the expanding chest robuster, in the bracing air.

Away, away! past green meadows with grazing steers, and tree-escorted, many-windowed, gliding palaces! Past slow sailing vessels—the steamer-waves clashing against their heavy sides, and leaving them to glitter in the sun! Past ferry-boats, with passengers in the stern-sheets,—the ferryman lying back upon his oars, far, far, behind you in the troubled waters! Past a motionless fisherman! Past a solitary on-looker, floating from before you like a dream—leaving you, indeed, to dream, wondering who he is—what he is—where was he going?—What were his thoughts?—But, rubby-dub-dub-dub! a townward steamer flashes on you; a host of faces gleam on you for an instant, and—are lost for ever. Now grows the river double. Islands of sand and waters on the bank speak of the tides: perches of wood and dikes of stone point out the steamer-track. On the left, rests a rich air on velvet lawns, and trees of royal tuft with ducal towers among. On the right, gently to the shelving mountain-ridge, rises the green upland, with hedge-divided fields—and hamlets sleeping in the sun—and the long stacks of factories shooting up—and solitary cottages—and church-spires through the trees. The banks widen into shores with

far-masted seaports : the river grows a sea dotted with fleets. But how?—the steamer suddenly seems to have stood stock-still ! Is it that she may gaze upon the opening glory ? That mighty castellated rock, cloven a-top, with soldiers' windows in the cleft,—standing out there, huge, solid, like a lump of lead—a solitary frown upon the liquid smooth—where the sea-gulls, with motion only of the lifting deep, brood on its shadow—seems impassable : we make no way. Far off, swoop graceful bays lined with white cottages. That island-promontory, coming down divisively, with its soft Italian hills, and lawny meads green to the very verge,—dips not in the deep, but, gliding on it, floats luxurious. Further on, those massy hills, brown, enormous bulks of one aspect, come to the water's edge, and brood, sulky, like sleepy lions ; while the silver water-ways, gleaming in their foldings, far between, seem paths to happiness. The air has a new relish in the nostrils. The paddles churn the spell-drawn, clear green waves to hissing snow. Still shines the sun. Ever at the prow, the golden-hooféd steed, his dazzling feet lifts sideways on the waters. Against the sky of deepest blue, in snowy flocks, half-hiding it, loose clouds are floating—but, our bold Juvenal, have we then forgot him ? Nay ; not so. But ye, our brother bubble-blowers—we mean, volume-blowers—blowers of three volumes—ye can speak of the temptation to describe ; ye can declare the economy and gain thereof ?*

Well, our bold Juvenal !—Ha ! already has he not formed an eye-acquaintance with that sweet young maiden ? Most beautiful she is ! She does not walk—she floats. There is an *aura* round her. The smile of seraph and the hue mellow her cheek. Amorous Juvenal ! how the heart wells up ! What impulse is there not, lifting one soft arm round her neck, with beaming eyes and liquid voice, to whisper wooingly, Maiden ! Canst thou love ? But no : he feels that

* What is sketched in the preceding is the sail down the Clyde, as it was years ago, when the sea in face of Dumbarton Castle was covered with gulls, and the slow steamers, emerging from the close river-banks where they had appeared quick, seemed, on reaching the open before the rock,—then apparently a long way off,—to have suddenly halted. '*Ducal*' is hyperbolical for *lordly*.

overmuch ; yet see the battery of charms he opens on her ! Those airs of hero-hood—that walk upon the deck, toes with due divergence outwards, and outer edge of heel set down accurately and firmly first—those bright eyes flashing on her ever as he passes—surely, all is irresistible ! He mounts the paddle-box. True, brave youth, your figure shows in strong relief, and gallantly you front the blast : but, on that high spot, blows not the breeze somewhat familiarly against your pantaloons ? Ah ! now he descends. He loiters round the funnel, evidently making preparations for a renewed assault. His courage is wound up ; he turns ; he mounts the quarter-deck ; once more he stalks before the fair one, having dexterously opened out his upper benjamin, and folded down the collar gracefully, so that the trimmer form within now shines from the divided hull victoriously upon her. With a natural love to elevated places, he ascends by the man at the wheel, and standing there, with folded arms, looks out upon the waste of waters : so stood Napoleon eager for the port of Frejus ; so stood Columbus anxious for the land of prophecy. Now, brave Juvenal ! now is it time to seat yourself, and, leaning o'er the bulwark, meditate, like a rapt poet lost in rich reverie,

When a maiden with a dulcimer
In a vision once he saw.

What ! start you up again ? Ah ! that picturesque pig-sty on the other side has caught your pictorial vision. Heavens ! what critical acumen, what æsthetic rapture, does not that attitude embody ? Can she resist ? Impossible ! But listlessly back on the seat, against the gunwale, you sink again, captivately drooping, from one resting elbow, the taper wrist, and delicate, small, white hand. One manly thigh, crossing the other, lifts into favourable light one exquisite, neat foot—Confusion ! that juvenile laced-shoe has spoiled it all. Has she observed it ? Ah, yes !—she must. Is there not a wicked smile upon her lip ! Heavens ! what shame—chagrin ! You sit stupefied, fallen double, shrunk together—‘as if gradually being scorched to tinder !’ That gentleman pacing the deck so unconcernedly—with such a free, spontaneous, voluntary movement—with such an air of un-

conscious consciousness that all is well with him—you quail and shrink beneath him. The trimly booted foot elastic from the deck—the cut-away coat—the fancy vest—the trousers without a crease—the double-pinned cravat—the gloves—the whole gentlemanlike turn-out—the whiskers—the confirmed symmetry—the thoroughly knit frame—the whole manly figure of tall elegance : you are overpowered, crushed, smothered ; you cannot breathe beneath him ! Poor boy ! beside him, how can you rank in her eye—in any eye—in your own ? You are a weed—a blot. All but you are well—and in their place—and happy. You alone do bear a stamp—a curse that separates you from your fellows. Cainlike, you are brow-marked—branded on the front—

A fixed figure for the hand of Time
To point his slow, unmoving finger at.

Who will look on *you* with eyes of admiration ? Who will love *you* ? *She* ? Will not she rather find her mistake out ? Will not she too come to see you as you are ? Could she love you beside that man ? Why think of her at all ? Shall you not bring but shame, mockery, and laughter on her ? O, is there no hiding-place ? Cannot you flee away—away, and change it all ? The mortification ! The rage ! The misery ! All has grown yellow—fuliginous. Sulphurous clouds, steaming on you, block the sweet air. Fiends with sneering glee point the finger at you. The bright world has become a lurid hell. Down, down the bottomless gulf of burning agony, of measureless despair, you sink precipitate, a rushing universe howling and yelling after you. But patience ! sweet Juvenal ! patience ! for

As high as we have mounted in delight,
In our dejection do we sink as low.

(And *vice versa*).

Your exaltation will yet arrive. Nay, even now, is it not arriving ? The lady fair has disappeared below ; and the man—the complete man—the gentleman—has gone forward to regale upon a weed : you are left, for the present, free from tormentors. You begin to breathe again. The stun and stound are passing rapidly. Tips of horns already pro-

trude from the protecting shell. Your natural self-delight reassumes its throne. The cramped midriff, reef after reef, resolves itself into unconsciousness. The troubled waters of your spirit sink into clearness. By and by, thoughts of the maiden fair recur again. Even as you think, wax you not valiant, bold—bolder and bolder? What if you, too, should go below? Lightly you leap up. Having buttoned your coat, and screwed yourself to the enterprise, you descend the slippery steps; you enter the cabin. Mirrors and mahogany, and peopled sofas, suddenly advance upon you, like an armed man. Blushing, confused, stumbling over and among the innumerable beams of all those eyes that burn upon you, precipitately you make your way to the shelter of a sofa. You seize a book; you hide your panic in its pages. Founded upon the rock of your sofa, masked by the curtain of your book, how rapidly the empty chalice of your assurance refills again! The liquid even swells arrogant above the brim; and must needs run over. With what an air you read, or seem to read! What astonishment your brows betoken! What determined resolution sharpens your eyes to penetrate—pierce through and through the very boards and paper of the book! What can match the energy of that withering sneer—the deep damnation of that cool contempt? Ah! at length, fortunate author! lucky scribe! the imperial lip, condescending graciously, relaxes into a most fascinating smile; and the book, approvingly, is laid aside.

Elegantly reclining on the sofa now, you fold your arms: and there, with hat drawn down upon your brows, picturesquely covering up one flashing eye, you sit as on a throne, watching all comers—seeing them through and through—picking out the very heart of their mysteries—pronouncing unappealably upon them. A child may perceive all this. How plain then must it not be to the young lady, who certainly does look somewhat frequently upon you? (Poor thing! how can she help it?) Ah victory! victory! Conquest fans his wings above your head. The sweet young maid is yours—irredeemably yours—the captive of your bow and spear! But what has happened? The steamer stops. Has she arrived? She has—the voyage is

accomplished. All rise and bustle to their traps. You contrive to close upon your captive—you almost touch her—your breath is on her neck, fluttering the golden hairs. Her head upturning, the glorious eyes swim up on yours—when a vulgar little woman—a mere bundle of two bunches, corded unequally in the midst, with a head sessile on the upper one—whom, all this time, you had quite forgot to look upon as your maternal parent—entering with a fussy, red face, accosts you loudly and uncereemoniously by the name of Peter, and, urging you to haste, thrusts into your hand a vile parcel in a cotton handkerchief, with a most villainous resemblance to a weaver's web. O Mercury! O Apollo! Ye, whatever powers that reign o'er fiction! And has it come to this? Although with sorrow, what can we but laugh?

Poor youth! but yesternight—no further gone—you read, entranced you read our latest fiction,—beginning with our favourite sentence of stereotyped precedency: It was on one of those — days in the close of —, that a lady and two gentlemen might be observed pacing the deck of a steamer, *en route*, &c.; 'wherein, by the colour of your hair, the shape of your leg, the manner of your gait, the expressure of your eye, forehead, and complexion, you did find yourself most feelingly personated;' you read; and lo! a golden vision burst upon you, that paled not with the dawn. Inspired, exalted, with proud heart of expectation, and loins girt for the assuréd, glorious enterprise, you embarked; you stood upon the deck. Alas! poor youth! Has, then, the vulgar touch of hands profane thus thawed the magic wax—unbound the Daedal wings—and brought you like a clod to earth, gasping and gaping? Is then the gauze and glamour of our sovereign phantasies thus torn and dissipated; the intoxication of our last new novel thus rudely shaken out of you? For was it not we who made you reel those tipsy steps upon the deck? Was it not we who charged the air till even Anny Macsnuffy, the tobacconist's daughter, loomed a heroine—a queen—an empress in disguise? For, indeed, is not our might magical—our power enchanting? Consider!

Who makes your lank hair flow in Hyacinthine locks—Antinous-like ringlets? Who gives you short heels, arched

feet, brawny limbs, and well-turned ankles? Who gives you deep chests, square shoulders, and bushy eyebrows? Who gives you long eyelashes, blue-veined lids, mighty jaws, most awful apples of Adam? Who gives you huge thumbs, and fleshy little fingers, indicating utter health and vast development of muscle? Who bestows on you that stately mien, majestic carriage, high port, haughty gait, and noble bearing? Who enables your tailor, when you have just left him, after a measuring, to tell such nice little stories about your well-knit frame, and whole symmetrical proportions? Who makes drunk Danemen say, as erst they said of Coleridge, 'Vat a noble brow! Vat a milk-vite forehead! Vat a god you are!' Who (*vide* Byron) makes Pachas praise your small ears and small hands, warrants of hero-hood, rendering all documents of blood, certificates of birth, useless, unnecessary? Who sends Bulwers to wanton in all similar particulars, describing your proud, haughty, repulsive, most mysterious, dark man, with sable curls, and folded arms, leaning on pillars, back from the crowd in ball-rooms? Who sends Carlyles even to speak of the good laugh that is in you, of your clear, penetrating eyes, imperial-swooping nose of gross projection, Mahomet-like, spontaneous, black-swelling veins upon the forehead? (O foppery of Novelism! what velvet cushions wilt thou not leave thy slime upon!)

Yea, even as we wave the enchanting rod, the wonders thicken. Who makes foundlings of you—ultimate inheritors of rank? Who steals you from your own disconsolate, high-born parents? Who changes you at nurse? Who transforms for you that plain, common-place, pimply-faced individual, generally known as Peter Smith and your father; who, though manifestly practising there the crafts of penmanship and figuring to a sugar merchant, and plainly and sensibly enough living on bread and beer, meat and potatoes, and other the like every-day edibles—is yet, in very truth, a very mysterious personage, possessed, no doubt, of many valuable and singular gold ornaments, with some of the finest baby-linen in the world—all of which, together with the three notable moles on your left hip, are yet happily to restore you to your natural dukedom?

Who secures you charms of invisibility, whereby you can enter theatres at will, and pay no doit of entrance-money? Who gives you prizes in lotteries—fortunes at gaming-tables—treasure-trove—the basis and foundation-stone of such glories and happiness; white-walled palaces with gleaming windows, hung o'er waters, with velvet lawns aslant and tufted trees above—blood-horses—yachts to cruise about the Mediterranean in—a wine-cellar with probably five hundred dozen of Sherry, as many of Madeira, two hundred of Port, a sprinkling of Claret and Champagne, not without Burgundy and old Rhenish, fifty gallons the best Glenlivet, twenty-five of Cognac, a little good gin (Hollands), some Rum, several dozens of Prestonpans Ale, and hogsheads of London triple X! Who floats you in a gondola at Venice, amid music, and moonlight, with glowing dames to flirt with? Who enables you to make jealous the husbands of all Spain? Who trains you up, like Byron (who, by the bye, seems to be the grand *beau ideal* of such as you), the skilfulest in all the earth at small-sword, broad-sword, cudgel-play, the best shot, and even the knowingest of boxers? Then again (still stimulated by us) have you not written the best tragedy, the best comedy, the best farce, the best melo-drama, the best song, epic poem, didactic poem, the best tale, novel, and romance, the finest essay, sermon, criticism, treatise, history, and leading article? Are you not the best painter, sculptor, naval admiral, horse-and-foot general?

Well: and who enables you to go through all these admirable businesses? Who gives you everything you can ask for—lubber-lands and Castles of Indolence of all descriptions? Who pampers and feeds fat all passions, prides, and vanities that live within you—in most of you, to the utter death of all else nobler—which, even in the highest, mightiest of the earth, are well nigh strangling and suffocating aught diviner growth—intellect, inspiration, mysterious heavings (as to the moon, a wave), mysterious heavings towards God?

Ah, yes! Society reels tipsily beneath our influence; youth steeps in an enervating, disintegrating bath of novelism: and petty vanity, fostered in our guano-compost,

driven by our artificial, hot-house heat, has every puniest larva quickened to a caterpillar, till the very air is darkened by a pestilential cloud of butterflies, and heaven is hid.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

BELSHAZZAR, the king, makes a feast to-night,
The windows are flashing their floods of light
On the dazzled eye
Of the passer by,
Who pauses a moment to list the sound
Of music, and mirth, and jollity.
How the casements shake to the dancer's bound,
And the roof laughs out in joy and glee !

Belshazzar is tired of the dance at last.
With a king's command,
He waveth his hand :
The dancers are still at his lordly will,
And silky-foot slaves have brought the repast.

Self-asserting lords of sword
And wine-cup,
Warm dames with flushing cheek and flashing eye,
Talking, laughing,
Eating, quaffing,
Pledge each other,
Feast together,
In freest license unrestrained.

Bravely the lords their liquor drink up,
Nor do the coyest dames the same deny,
But gaily strike upon the board
The flagon drained.
All indiscriminately are mingled,
No one from the rest is singled,
But the king,
High, upraised upon his seat,

While at his feet,
There sit
His wives with jewels glittering.

O much Belshazzar loves the feast,
And much he loves the wine,
But, more than all, he loveth best
His peerless concubine.

And which is she ?
—Nay, nay,—I see !
Her arms the king embrace.
How passing fair !
Not one is there,
Who may compare
With her in loveliness !

And see !
He turns to look upon the face
Of her, the beautiful and fair,
Who kneeling, leaning, clinging there,
In heart-encompassing embrace,
Empties upon her lord her bosom's treasure.
O beautiful as a dream is she !
The dance-flush blending with the white,
In soft-uniting radiance,
Glowing crimson on her cheeks ;
Her jewelled bosom seeks,
Up-panting from its drapery,
To pour upon his sight
Its twain smooth lovelinesses,
With velvet glade between,
While odour with mystic influence,
Floats from her disordered tresses.

From forth her gorgeous garments disarrayed
In loose, voluptuous abandonment,
Her marble ankle, gold-enchained,
And delicate foot are seen,
With dainty, shapely, added toen,
Interspaced with purple sheen,

While the sandal strayed,
Which left it bare,
Glitters on the golden stair
Of the rich-enrobéd throne.

Glowing !
Beautiful without measure,
Vivid daughter of the East,
Passion-raising queen of weirdest pleasure,
Will the mighty king resist?
He !

Ha, already,
Is not the liquid mantle flowing,
Nearer, nearer, closer-clasping,
Round him overwhelmingly ?
Is not wheeling his unsteady
Brain in irresistible emotion's eddy ?
Till see !

Her soft arm grasping,

He——

' Health to the king Belshazzar,
Health to the king Belshazzar,
Health to the king Belshazzar !'
From a thousand throats is roared,
And a thousand drained cups
Clash on the banquet board ;
Then stops
The mad din,
The while they grin.
Belshazzar glares :
Gods ! could a stamp
Annihilate, enswamp,
These jeering wassailers !

But again, and yet again,
Half-sure, they bawl amain,
' Health to the king Belshazzar,
Health to the king Belshazzar,
Health to the king Belshazzar !'
Till he

Has smiled.
Then they,
All wild,
Smite the charged tables till the roar
Rings in the rafters, reels along the floor.

With haughty grace he rises, king,
His state in every lineament.
With haste they hush their mirth,
To hear him speak,
The master of the earth,
Whose black brows lowering,
With streak
Of flush upon the cheek,
Betray the discontent,
The half-hid temper insolent.

With left arm still caressing her,
Whose arms round him entwine,
With right he lifts his goblet up,
And sips,
Just stains in the dark wine
His lips.
Then proud,
While silence wraps the hall,
And rythmical,
Thus speaks he with a nod :—

‘ Chaldeans, men of Babylon,
Toppers without a paragon,
Our wine is good, and fair each cup,
And the wine it is sweet in the cups that are here,
But the wine will be better,
And its taste will be sweeter,
If we drink from the vessels of silver and gold,
That the sword and the spear
Of our warriors bold
Took from the Hebrew God——’

• • • • •

And in that hour, the fingers of a hand
Came forth, and wrote upon the wall

Over against the king. He saw it—wan'd ;
 And with a sudden fall,
 The cold blood left him, and his weak knees smote
 Each other as, passively pointing still,
 He gasped. Then horror's awful thrill
 Congealed the hearts of all, in that dread spot,
 Who followed the king's eye, and shivering, chill,
 Saw the weird hand, but knew not what it wrote.

Then hoarsely he bade call his cunning men.
 Soothsayer, astrologer, they came. In vain !
 Daniel alone, the prophet, captive Jew,
 Could to the king Jehovah's sign construe.
 Belshazzar then bethought him of the God
 Whom he had braved, and knew but things of fraud
 His idols, silver, and of gold, brass, wood.
 He bowed. In ashes he repented him.
 —Too late ! That very night Darius grim
 Slew him. The Medish clarion
 Blew over Babylon.
 The silver idols, or of wood, brass, stone,
 Were naught. God willed it. Ahriman had won.*

THE TALE OF AIHAI.†

IN one of the cities of the plain dwelt Aihai, the son of
 Wosmi. And he was but a lad, and tender in his growth :
 nevertheless he was older than his years, and riper than his
 growth ; for he was eager in his soul and like unto a flame
 in thinking. And, in the speed of his spirit, he undervalued

* I find on the old brown MS. of this piece, with formality of
 signature and note of place, the following memorandum :—' Finished
 thus May 26, 1841, though some of it was written three years ago.'

† Though published in 1851 (John Chapman, London), this Tale
 was really a product of boyhood (17), as were *Merla*, *Belshazzar*,
 and others,

himself; setting at nought the things that were his, but putting beyond all price the things that were not his: and he longed with a great longing; and his soul was a want. And he feared the eyes of men, and shrank from them; and slunk through the streets of the city. For in the crowd of careless passengers, glittering with ornament, graceful in raiment, assured in movement, he felt himself an alien. Ah! he was not as one of them! He was not clothed as they: he could not move, walk, talk as they. He was not made as they: how firm they seemed! how easy in themselves! how at home with others! And he cried in bitterness, that he was but an owl,—a dazzled owl overtaken by the daylight;—a toad upon the palace-marble, unsightly in the sunshine! For the young men and the maidens looked askance upon him, questioning his presence coldly and with contempt.

And so it was that, shuddering and shrinking as from a sneerer by his ear, the youth would flee, with heart a-wild for refuge.

Now, it so happened that Aihai stood, one evening, afar off, and looked upon the city; and he was alone and very lonely; and his soul was bitter. The glebe lay ruddy in the westerling sun; and over it the monuments of heroes flung their long shadows to the east; and the elders soberly communed together; and the children were at play; and the labourers crossed hastily homewards; and the young men walked with the maidens: and on the skirts of all, the gold of evening hung. But Aihai stood apart as one that had lost his heritage and was disowned of his kin. And he saw the city, and the smoke go up from the many, many houses—homes they were—ah! and amid them all was there none for him? Why was not he too something? Why was not he too, like the rest, pleased in himself, happy in his place?

So over the youth the firmament lowered; and his face darkened; and he fled. But, after a while, he sat him down—on a green slope, tree-plumed, that took the campaign in, he sat him down, and wept. And, when he had wept, he lifted up his eyes, and cried: 'Ai, ai! I am but as a dwarf, and misbegotten; and I cannot sit among the men!' And again he cried, saying, 'Father, Father! make it otherwise

with me ! Father, Father ! make it otherwise !' And he trembled, and was afraid ; for he wist not if he did right or no. But, when he had made an end of speaking, behold ! a wind came, and the earth shook, and he fell upon his face. And he heard a voice that spake as from the meeting of the winds : *and he knew that his wish was given him.* And he was astonished, not moving from the spot ; but, after a while, he arose, and returned to his own home.

And Aihai, in the morning, got up fearful : but, behold ! in his stature he had grown ; and he was glad in heart ; and went forth in merriment. And, all day long, he strode about the streets, exulting ; he overlooked this thing, and he measured himself by that. He followed his shadow in the sun ; and he delighted himself by the water course. He babbled to himself : and told himself little stories of himself. His stature, which, in the language of men, was now as five feet and four inches, was a good stature, he said,—a sufficient stature ; and the men of that stature were squat and square and brawny, with abundant muscle, not despicable of their fellows.

But evening came ; and shadows fell ; and it was not well with him, even as it had seemed to be. What was his stature, then, that he should be proud of it ? or his strength that he should rejoice in it ? Not as the tall man was he ; not as the strong. His height was not even as that of the middle ; his height was not even as that of the most. And he grew bitter as of old ; and cursed himself ; and said that he should be as a dwarf continually. And he wished that he were only as the most—only as they that are named of the average.

And Aihai arose in the morning and stood up ; and behold ! he had waxed in his sleep ; and his stature was as the stature of the most. And his heart was glad ; and he was light, elastic, nimble as the very air. O, it was a good height—an excellent height ! the height of such a one and such a one, and a whole host of those renowned in the books ! A good height ! an excellent height ! There was spring in it ; there was breath in it. And he went upon the streets ; and he stood by this one, and he stood by that one ; and he was pleased to find so many no taller than himself.

And he entered the field by the city, where the youths did wrestle. And he stood up, and wrestled, and overthrew his opposite,—even Hit, the son of Cush, the same that, in times past, had been mightier than Aihai, and had overthrown and baffled him. But, lo ! there came a stronger than Hit, and overthrew Aihai. And Aihai was foiled ; and he went home in bitterness. What was his strength that he should rejoice in it ? or his stature that he should be glad ? He was not even as they that did hold the middle place. He was but as the herd,—but as the common ones ; but as they that sat at the trades, and as they that put on smiles in the shops. His stature to-day was worse than that of yesterday. Muscle and squareness were in that : but in this, neither. All insignificant men were they that were named of the average. And, in his mind, he saw them, of a feast-day, in their ill-fitting holiday apparel, how limp they were, and weak, and good for nothing ! And he was vexed to look as they looked. It had been better had he remained as yesterday—No !—but he was not tall enough, not strong enough : he was miserable.

Again Aihai stood up in the morning ; and his height was increased ; and his stature was as the stature of the middle. And he was pleased. At last he was a man, and of the stature of a man, and none could jostle him. And he arose, and went out, and walked in the streets, and possessed his soul in happiness. He was a right-sized man ; he was firm, compact, muscular—a match for any, or a match for all.

But, when he had walked a while, he heard laughter and the voices of the gay behind him ; and he cowered in heart and fell into himself, trembling, burning, longing to escape. But the glad wave of high gallants and rich ladies, overtaking, overswept him ; and, bubbling, churming, in bravery and laughter, joyously swept on—out to the great sea of happiness ; leaving him behind, like a weed stranded.

Then Aihai, for a space, walked as one that walketh in a swoon, the which resolves itself at length into misery and tears. What was he to them ? Were they not all tall and fashioned beautifully ? Ah no ! he was not as other men. There was a ban against him : he was not tall enough ; he

was not strong enough. He would flee away—away to far lands. He would make himself a chief in the tents of the stranger. He would return—he would return with ten thousand glittering spearmen and ride upon his enemies.

Thus Aihai walked in dream of bitterness. The middle stature? Yes: but that was not tall. And why (if any) should not he be tall? Why should not men have it to say of him that he was strong and tall and handsome, full of beauty, manly and brave? So his mouth was filled with discontent, and he lay down in gall.

And Aihai, in the morning, when he awoke, was still sad, and his heart was heavy; and he arose not, but lying, languished. And he thought to himself, where were the promises of childhood—the beautiful things that boyhood babbled of—the young ideal it forethrew of manhood? Ah, I was beautiful then, he cried; forehead, eyes, and wavy mouth made me of a glaring and unescapable beauty. So fondly as I deemed myself foredoomed to herohood—predestinate to godship—yea, even to the godship of grace, love, strength, and beauty. But see! I am not as a man—as a babe only, a deserted babe. My mother's bosom is too rough for me; her milk is bitter. My brothers are too strong; their games too rude. The wheels of this huge universe clank too loudly in mine ears: I flee—I flee in fear. I was not made for men: I was not made for earth!

But when Aihai arose, behold! his grief was turned to joy; and his complaints to merriment; for, of a verity, again he had grown; and his stature was as the stature of five feet and ten inches, well-knit, elastic, powerful. And Aihai cried aloud in the greatness of his joy, and shouted out that his height was the height of heights—a man's height—the height of strength and activity, grace and swiftness!

So Aihai would show himself to the maid he loved: he would walk abroad with her; he would enjoy her happiness; he would enjoy her pride.

And the twain went forth; and both were happy: for Aihai had power in every fibre and grace in every turn. As they strolled on and on, a troop of the King's body-guard encountered them; and they were drunken and agog for mischief; and they addressed the lovers, and the damsel in

especial, coarsely and aloud. Aihai had felt himself, on their approach, dwarfed : what was he to them ? what could he against such gigantic weight, such grand proportions ? He felt rebuked by them ; he cowered under them ; in thought he truckled to them. But, now, as one insolent dared touch, dared seek to kiss the maid, indignation shook him like a reed—with one blow he felled the ruffian, and stood above him, mighty.

But what was one to ten ?

Baffled and foiled, in his chamber Aihai sat in tears and misery. He was not strong enough. It did not suit that men should elbow him. He should be able to stand his ground with man or men : he should be inferior to none of them. O, it did not suit that any man should master him ! How could *she* love him ? He must be able to defend *her* against the world. The first of his kind he must be, or else he was worthless to her.

But Aihai slept, and was comforted, and arose, and behold ! as he stood up, he was six feet high. And he leaped up, and he shouted, Ha ! I am strong, strong ! with my fist I can fell ye ; with my foot I can spurn ye !

But the frame of Aihai ceased not yet awhile from growing ; and he was very great and very strong, and more than six feet in his stature. And he sought his foes ; and, one by one, he conquered them ; till the wrath of years was emptied ; and a thousand petty taunts avenged : and the thunder had spent itself ; and the air was purged of its fire ; and Aihai, at length, possessed his soul untroubled. The world was at last his own. He would go home ; and with father and with mother and with sister and with brother, he would sit down in peace ;—to live and love resolved for ever.

And Aihai with sweet looks entered into the dwelling of his kindred ; and the dog from the hearth arose and fawned on him ; but silent, motionless as the grave, was the whole household else. And Aihai sickened in his heart ; but he sat him down, and looked at them. Sullen were they all ; and neither looked nor spoke to him. His mother was out of temper : the household demands of his great bulk had wearied her : yet had she been very proud of him. His brothers looked sourly at him : he overshadowed them ; he

ate more than his own share of the pottage ; he took up more than his own room in the bed. His father sat sulky with a red eye, casting up the cost of him.

Then Aihai was troubled in his soul, and, rising up, left them. With a swollen heart he passed into the street. The neighbours greeted him—in mockery he thought. And wretched jokes were screamed to him from corners, and the jeering question, ‘When did he intend to stop growing?’ But Aihai heeded them not : for he was great.

So mile after mile strode Aihai onwards, neither knowing of his speed, nor of the ground he trode on. Mile after mile : nor stop, nor pause : still onward, onward ! mile after mile, till, suddenly, with a roar, the waves, those shaggy watch-dogs of the sea, uprose and leaped at him. Then Aihai paused ; and looked afar upon the waters : and behold ! a great ship floated on the swell ; and the voices of the mariners that did raise the anchor came cheerily to the land.

Then swift thoughts filled the heart of Aihai ; and he said to himself that he too would go forth with them to the far lands where the diamond was, and the ruby and the pearl and gold and ivory and things of price. His arm was strong, he would——and he would return ! So Aihai hailed the ship ; and a boat came off for him ; and he was taken on board. And his strength pleased the captain ; and he was received into the number of the crew.

And many days the good ship journeyed over the waste of waters ; and she encountered many storms. But Aihai was very strong ; and his heart was very bold ; and he did great things for the good ship and the captain and his crew, and the lives of all.

And many days dwelt Aihai with the stranger ; and he was mighty in war, and overcame great princes. But it came to pass that, in the fulness of time, Aihai sickened, and longed for his own land, and his own home. And he took ship ; and left the stranger ; and behold ! he had waxed exceedingly ; and he stood now like a giant. And the great ship grew to him as a place of torture. The mast bent and crackled as he scaled it. The shrouds burst beneath his feet. The spars rent and the ropes tore asunder

in his hands : and the sides of the ship were become unknown to him. Like a perpetual sentinel, he strode along the deck ; and all weathers were alike to him. The mariners, as they heard his step above their heads, grew white and trembled, for the great ship shook beneath it. Strange whispers grew among them : ' Was he a man, then ? or what was he ? '

And they were still far from land ; and they saw that their stores were rapidly diminishing. And they thought to themselves what were they to do with this great monster that grew daily taller and taller and larger and larger ? So they planned plots ; and they shot arrows from their bows against him. But the steel fell broken on the deck ; and the conspirators, caught up, each by the nape of the neck, were pitched a furlong far into the sea.

Then the rest hid themselves in the sides of the ship ; nor would bring food to Aihai. But Aihai laughed ; and struck his heel into the deck ; and tore the boards up ; and seized upon the stores, and ate and drank and filled himself.

So the great ship drifted on as if deserted ; and every rope and sail remained as they had been put ; and only the great shadow of Aihai fell far upon the sea. But, after a time, the mariners were a-hungred ; and they crawled to the feet of Aihai, and supplicated food. And Aihai gave them food ; and they were filled ; and they went up upon the mast, and tended the sails as they had used to do.

And Aihai cared in truth but little for his life ; nevertheless, he was well pleased when the great ship floated to the walls of the well-known harbour. And Aihai left the ship and stood upon the beach ; and he wist not what to do ; for there could be no home for him. So with great strides he strode up and down on the shore ; and his shadow that moved along the sea, and his footprints in the sand, were wonderful to behold.

But it so happened that the King heard of him ; and he sent messengers to him there where he strode along the sea ; and commanded him to come before him. So Aihai stood before the King and his whole Court ; and they were amazed. And the king clothed him ; and put a great sword into his hand ; and set him before his gate to guard it. And the

people flocked to see him ; and every tongue spoke of him ; and he was a marvel throughout the land.

And the people murmured, and they said : ' We labour and we toil, and behold ! we starve and our children starve ; and hardly can we find the wherewithal to clothe the back and fill the belly of the King's great bodyguard.' And like the small birds in the shadow of the eagle's wings they lived ; and they crept abroad in terror : for the bulk of Aihai gloomed upon the city. And the King and his whole Court hated him, and would have killed him speedily, but that they feared him.

Then Aihai saw their thoughts ; and he arose in bitterness and cried : ' My stomach, it is mocked with crumbs ; and my palate, it is cheated with thimbles. I will go forth to the wilderness. I will lay me down with the beasts of the field, and with the wild beasts of the forest.'

And he went forth. A mighty shape, he trode the impenetrable forests ; and they crashed before him. He wanted not for food ; for his feet were swift and his hands were strong. Raw, uncooked, he ate it ; and he was delirious with joy. He whooped to the eagle ; he raced with the wild horse. He chased the elephant in wantonness ; and sprang upon him with a shout ; and weighed him to the ground, and the huge bulk stumbled powerless. The lion growled and glared and made to spring on him ; and Aihai also growled and glared, and mocked him, and took him by the beard, and shook him. And the lion sprang ; but Aihai caught him by the paws, and looked him in the face ; and tossed him into the air ; and the carcass thudded on the ground ; and brains and blood bespattered him. Then Aihai laughed ; and fearful were the echoes from the empty hills. And he plucked the oak, and tore its green head piecemeal, and snapped its trunk upon his knee. He unfixed the rock, and flung it through the air. He bestrid the lake : he leaped the valley. For he was wild.

And the sun, at length, stooped to the forest, and threw his red eye through the trees ; while night, like a widow, came and knelt upon the ground and wept. Then Aihai, on the untrodden grass, stretched his vast bulk and slumbered. And all night long, there were as wings and shapes about

the sleeper with fearful whisperings and voice of woe. Yea wo ! wo to the murmurer ! wo, wo for ever !

But the sun arose, and, peeping into the eyes of Aihai, stirred him. And Aihai stood up ; and lo ! he was taller than the tallest of the mighty forest brood : their green heads lay beneath him like a sea. Then Aihai was amazed, and wandered to and fro in vacancy. But still with tenfold speed he felt his huge frame grow and grow, up-rushing to the heavens. In mid air he met the lark, that dropped in terror. And the eagle rested on his head, nor knew that there was life in him.

‘For ever shall I grow, for ever !’ In panic of the sudden thought, thus shouted Aihai ; and his shout was as a whirlwind that rent the hills and overwhelmed the valleys. Then rushed the mighty bulk, like tempest, over earth, and from the peak of Calpe leaped into the main. In vain ! Great ocean, like a rivulet, but wets his feet ; and the clouds hang as films upon his ankles. His foot is on the earth, as on the cupola of a dome that dwindles, dwindles, leaving it. The sole of his heel can find no resting place ! He falls ! See him, the mighty log, falling for ever, falling, falling, falling——

‘Ha ! ’tis but a dream !’

On the green slope, tree-plumed, that took the champaign in, the youth was sitting ; and night was over him, and the unfathomable stars. And he arose : and, behold ! as he stood up the veil was lifted ; and he saw the whole huge universe lying in the hollow of God’s hand.

That night, Aihai returned to his own home, fearless !

‘’Tis His,’ he said, *‘not mine.’*

In the morning, he arose, smiling : he felt all men to be his fellows ; and all men felt him to be theirs.

The dream is dreamed, the play is played :

O boy, O girl, O man, O wife !

Even of such stuff the whole is made ;

And such the pageantry of life !

’Tis thine—thine own—thine own to hold :

Confront it ! be its joyous lord,

And bring, by step and station bold,

The pliant world to accord

THE BALLAD OF MERLA.

[I SUPPOSE life, if it is ever life, is emphatically so to the hobbled-hoy who is literary and a student. He, surely, *formaliter* and *eminenter*—to speak like Descartes—lives. *Now* only it is that there is for him nature. The veil is lifted from the universe, and he sees it before him golden. He climbs the mountain, and has rapture in its breath. He rushes to the sea, and wrapt in its vast monologue, wanders delirious. Lake and river, rocks and trees and flowers, fountains that bubble up, the sun, the moon, the stars, clouds and the firmament of blue—he sees them all for the first time : there is a glamour in the very grass. Now it is, too, that his eyes fall upon the maidens ; and they are all beautiful—white-browed, vermeil-cheeked, golden-haired, *goddesses*. Nay, the very men are caught up into the new glory : so strong they seem,—well-built, firm-knit, and manly, so assured and self-possessed ! And books—poets ! How he glows as he reads them,—how he treads as on billows of bliss when alone with them,—how he raves with kindled eyes to his fellows of them !

Well now, it is such as he who, at the age of seventeen, shall write the Ballad of Merla, and he shall read it then to his own little band of brothers. Well, enthusiasm is the breath of their nostrils, and they are all generous. Ah ! the young grass looks so fresh in the dew of the morning, that they feel as he feels ; *freshness* is the bursting word from all of them,—and they exultingly hail a deed done, a work accomplished !

That it is not. This ballad is no whole for the public. Yet, carried, all these years, in one's girdle as it were, one is fain to hope that, partially (but connectedly) exhibited as now, it may find some kindly young reader here and there, with sympathy enough to forgive the immaturity.

And now, here on the threshold, one cannot see draw near again (*'Ihr naht euch wieder !'*) these once familiar figures (*'shwankende Gestalten !'*) without calling out like Goethe,—if *sic componere* be at all allowable :—

'Ye come again, ye phantoms inståbile !
That long erewhile my troubled vision drew :
Ye press up still !—well, good !—then have your will.'

INTRODUCTION.

MUSE of the ballad-chant !
What name is thine peculiarly ?
Not of the Nine thou seem'st thyself to vaunt :
Not lyred Melpomene, not staid Calliope !

Small loss ! words may not bring
Thee from thy primal mountain-haunt,
With presence down and privilege to sing,
If he who calls the fit-receiving spirit want.

But not in vain he calls,
Whom the strong Fates such soul assign ;
Joy, lifting at his heart, earth-tumult quells,
And limpid light serene glows in his eyes divine.

Muse, simple, sylvan, lone !
Me have thy votaries made glad,
Me filled with wish of like inspiréd tone,
But I no fit-receiving spirit may have had.

True theme for thee I've found,
With numbers soote to drapery,
To hang thy rich, angelic breath around,
And odorous make with fragrance of divinity.

True theme I have, theme such
As erst were those of thy inspiring,
The huge Sea-Kraken, hugest of the huge,
Huger than huge Leviathan, all ocean stirring.

I link with him, as well,
The tale of gentle lovers twain :
The past, the present, and the future tale
Of love by hard sire crossed, and all, by right, in vain.

No mortal mould below
To bind true love has warranty :
Canute may stay the tide, and Xerxes throw
The Hellespont in bonds, but love—love will be free !

Then, simple maid, consent
To drive from me, from me, afar,
New flippancy, facile trippancies, but grant
Thy chastened fire, thy subdued tones oracular !

Let thine own breath be mine !
Me, and my first approaches, meet
With favour and strong influence divine
To lift me from the herd, and lay me by thy feet !

PART I.

AUTUMNAL morn ! Within the fog,
The path shows white across the lea ;
The hoar-frost furs the fallen log,
Breathes on the stile, and silvers every tree,——

Saving, perchance, some great pine tall,
Whom, mighty, in a plaiting pliant,
From root to twig, green ivy shall
Wrap, as the ringéd armour wraps a giant.

The sun, sole alchemist, transmutes
To gold, the silver of the dawn ;
The smitten path-way swiftly shoots,
Kindling and blackening, o'er the smoking lawn.

The meadows struggle into green,
And open, steaming, to the air,
With glimpse of blurred roof dim-seen,
And molten gleam of water here and there.

Eastward, the illuminated mist,
That drinks the glory of the sun,
Is loud with quick-voiced, eagerest
Lark, whose new glee is never to be done.

The crow croaks cheery overhead :
While the blithe cock's first lusty cheer,
From cot but half awakenéd,
Falls, like new health, all *caller* on the ear.

So *caller* is the breath of morn,
So *caller* is the meadow wet,
So *caller* is the tinkle borne
From run of field-dividing runnelet !

[From the introduction, we infer that what is before us is a ballad ; and we expect, by consequence, if with something of chivalry and romance, still, in the main, simplicity, homeliness, and, as it were,

old-world naïveté. Our imagination is roused, moreover, to what is legendary, by mention of the Kraken, which we dimly picture to ourselves as something of unusually grisly terror. A sea-monster of half a league in compass, with vast horns that, as Scott says, 'welk and wave' incessantly, it draws into its myriad clammy feelers, by the mere suction of its own sinking, whatever may be found floating within miles of the boiling vortex it sets up over it. Certainly a monster! And certainly also, it has been the fashion to regard this monster as but a creature of phantasy, conjured up out of some mere mist, or whale, or shoal of dolphins, or one or other of the two last looming through the first. It is not alien here, however, as will be easily understood, to remark that something may be said on the other side. The description namely, which we have just seen, is to be found in the *Norwegian Natural History* of Pontoppidan, and there is a certain weight in this. To explain,—there are two Pontoppidans, for example, both Erics, and both bishops, the one having been Bishop of Drontheim, and the other of Bergen. Both of these celebrated men—and they were celebrated—were authors, and of works still in repute; but it is the younger who is incomparably the greater and the more valuable. He it is who is the author of the *Natural History* named. He wrote, also, a multitude of other works, as, *Annales Ecclesie Danie*, *Marmora Danica*, *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam*, *Origines Hafnenses*, *Danske Atlas*, *Glossarium Norvagicum*. These works, all folios or quartos, are described as composed with the 'greatest diligence,' as, in some cases, holding the rank of 'original sources,' and, in others, that of 'indispensable' collections, as having 'enriched' historical knowledge, not only nationally, but also universally, as 'not unimportant contributions' to philosophy, etc. Pontoppidan himself is spoken of as 'a scholar of the first rank,' a man of 'thoroughly comprehensive learning,' who, moreover, had completed his education by extensive travels and by intercourse with celebrated *literati*. The positions he occupied confirm the testimony: he was, successively, Court Preacher, Professor of Theology, Bishop, and (lastly) Chancellor of the University of Copenhagen. It is scarcely possible to doubt such a man as this. But, as regards veracity, we have to consider, further, that he was remarkable for his 'piety,' being an adherent of *Spener*, the German 'Reformer of the religious life of the Protestant Church in the 17th century;' in which sense are written Pontoppidan's religious works, still popularly in vogue, as his *Faith's Polished Looking-Glass*, and his theological romance of *Menora*, valuable for its interesting characteristics of eminent Christian contemporaries. The work specially before us, consisting of two quarto volumes, published at Copenhagen in 1752-54, is also well spoken of as a contribution to the subject, and it was written in its author's best years, when, namely, he was from 50 to 56. Here, then, is an authority that cannot be lightly gainsaid. Besides, there is the important fact that, since Pontoppidan wrote, actual sight of the monster has been twice attested on oath: once by the crew of an English herring-buss, and again by a certain ship's crew: the dates being respectively Aug. 1774 and Aug. 5, 1786. To all

this testimony is now to be added that of the present writer himself (not to mention quite recent depositions to such huge sea-monsters), who has his own good reasons for recommending all the facts of the ensuing narrative to the best belief of the reader. I may mention, by the way, that Sir Walter Scott has surely made a mistake when he calls Pontoppidan Bishop of Upsala, and not of Bergen. Upsala is in Sweden, and Bergen is in Norway, which then belonged to Denmark.

From the opening verses, we understand, further, that we are in the season of autumn: 'From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve, an *autumn's* day,' followed, too, perhaps, by an autumn's night!

The 'new trippant facile flippancies' must, of course, be looked for a life-time, or half a life-time ago. Then, that the word *caller* should have been used for that peculiar healthy freshness so characterised in Scotland, need not surprise in a ballad,—considering, too, that the Kraken takes us to the north. Indeed, in the very next verses, we learn that we must conceive ourselves in some island or other, somewhere in the region of Scotland, and under the sway of 'some war-like chief,' to whom fishing, quite as much as fighting, is not unknown.

Homeliness and naïveté have been mentioned: the chances are that we are to have too much of both. May they but pass muster on any or all the pleas set up—especially where mere narrative is concerned !]

Still ruddy is the chill castell,
And still the mist is on the sea,
But, up, alert, the bluff chief's hail
Already calls his boats out lustily.

And Merla, too, hath left her bower,
(To-day is even as yesterday !)
Already from the castle-tower,
Wistful, she looks afar upon the bay.

Haló-embeamed in filmy air,
Tranced like a nun, angelic, holy,
Rich-cheeked and pale, with large eye clear,
Of grief, and charmed lip of melancholy,

She sees, and yet sees not, the shore
Busy with men—mere mocks of sleep ;
She sees, and yet sees not, the oar
Flash, later, there, afar upon the deep.

[And thus we are introduced to our heroine, Merla—seeing all that she sees only mechanically, watching only mechanically the departing boats, as they grow and grow in the mist, then fade, and break, and vanish—still, to her, chillingly.]

At length, she turneth tearfully,
One step—not moving from the spot,
One step, all slowly, tearfully,
One swimming step, and pauseth on the float.

O spotless maiden without sin,
What sorrow rich, what passion warm,
Up-growing, like a flower within,
Thus sways upon its stalk thy yielding form?

What thought divine, O lily fair!
Fills thy pale cheek? What too full load
Weighs thy cup down? Upon the air
Why hangeth thou, with soul that melts abroad?

This isle, it is the loneliest
Playmate of ocean and of storm,
Yet gentle were the powers whose hest
Shaped those sweet eyes—those eyes and peerless form.

O modesty, that steals a glance
With vailing of the virgin face,
In her marts not, but doth enhance
A queenly mien of elemental grace.

And beauty, light ethereal,
O'erflowing rich, glammers her trail
With visions that through tears recall
Some waning dream of shapes in fairy pale.

[It would seem, thus, that the chief and his men have left their chill castell, and struck to sea-ward of the island,—probably to bait their hooks upon the 'far bank.' We are left alone, consequently, with Merla, and the autumn day in further advance.]

For now 'tis noon. The hills in mass
Rise naked, bare. Sharp-edged and bright,
Rift, rock, tree, stone, and pile of grass
Glance in a golden cleanness, newly dight.

Fresh from the bath all things appear,
Earth is new-born in *callerness*,
While, buoyant in the buxom air,
Leaps lusty health and jocund cheerfulness.

The sun, with bold eye, like a knight,
Hath sprung into the heaven alone,
And holds him royal there ; his bright
Gage thrown, defiant, haught-lipped champion.

The sea, like molten metal, beads
The isle ; the gull-birds float asleep ;
The dingy tresses of the weeds,
The bulbed sea-weeds, lift with the lifting deep.

That rock, that, like a bastion,
So boldly over ocean stands,
Against whose naked front the sun
Hath showered his keen and skinkling diamonds,

Full well the foot of Merla knows ;
With grass its top is carpeted,
With green sea-grass so small and close ;
—Nay, look ! already doth the dreaming maid,

Her white hands clasped in idleness,
Sans book, sans work, almost sans motion,
Sit there in utter loneliness,
Scarce seeing the blue sky and lustrous ocean ;

Hearing in dreams the liquid *rilsh*
Of waves at play upon the rocks ;
Feeling in dreams the soft air filch—
Filch, but fling back again, her golden locks.

Strange dreams I ween, piercing the rind
Of cloud and sky, of wave and sea ;
Striving unconsciously to find
Light in the hall of inner mystery !

—Yet, brooding on her own still heart
Is not, in truth, the sole intent
She has, in coming to this rock
To sit, whole days, this maiden innocent.

Dark-flowing hair and lustrous brow,
A manly presence, mild, kind eye,
Young Aidan had ; a bold true knight,
And famed among the first in chivalry.

He was a chief of fair Scotlánd,
A gallant youth, with shield and sword
Had come to help these islanders,
And done good work upon a foreign horde.

He saw young Merla—saw and loved.
And she saw him, and loved ere-long :
What could she else ?—The stately youth,
That was so bold in fight, so sweet in song !

They loved : the speaking blushes came
On meeting of their eyes, still prone—
Still stupid-prone to meet, and bright
Ever with meaning for themselves alone.

Deep, deep as aether, and as pure,
Was Aidan's love. He overhung
As aether earth, with smiles, the maid
Bosomed and mantled from all scorn and wrong.

And Merla loved ! When he was gone,
All things without grew strangely dim,
Her life, her inmost being seemed
Floating in one, sole, dreamy thought of him.

Now heavier fell his arm in fight,
Now sweeter far his song became,
His plume waved loftier in the van,
Tameless, undaunted, rose his heart of flame.

Lovelier far the maiden grew,
Angelic in the light of love,
For love is effluence divine,
A magic thing, a garment from above.

So happy, happy, were they now,
O'er rock and cliff, by sea-shore roving
In silent, liquid happiness :
Ah happy twain, young, lovely, loved, and loving !

A land of light and melody,
A land of fairy loveliness,
These barren rocks now grew to them :
Such sheen flowed from their own deep happiness.

[But 'alas, alas, that this should pass !' the course of true love
never runs smooth, it seems ; never has, and never will ; and now
the cross comes, so——]

Alas, alas that it should be,—
Twin spirits o'er the yellow sand,—
They could not wander ever thus,
Bright in each other's brightness, hand in hand !

But her gruff sire has lowered his brows—
Lowered his black brows, and crossed the twain :
A stubborn man, with rough-grown frame,
That fought, and fished, and lived upon the main !

Sharp swords, swift boats, and armour good,
Peril by day, wassail by night,
Were all his care. Already he
Had chose, though never named, the favourite

Should wed the maid. Resolve remained
Wholly unchangeable with him ;
He saw the knight was bold and strong,
He even liked his harp of some chance time,

But never thought a stranger's blood
Fit match to mingle with his own,
And never dreamed that child of his
Could ever disobey his wish when known.

But slowly, by degrees, he saw
The knight and maid were still together,
And dimly thought that somehow this
Might interfere with his intention with her.

So, out, the spears, the swords, the helms,
All the mixed booty when they fought—
That he made carry to the shore,
Struck just division, gave the knight his lot,

And told him out at once his mind :
' The wind blew steadily and fair
(Blunt words in blunt simplicity)
For Scotland, if the knight were going there.'

[And so he is gone, and Merla is dejected almost unto death, and 'Ever thus it fares with love,' but 'fearless let the parted be,' for 'Canute may stay the tide, and Xerxes throw the Hellespont in bonds, but love—love will be free !' Or, in homelier accents, but quite as true, 'Though sister, brother, mother frown, and sire say nay, yet love—love *will* be free !']

Now eve hath come ; but see ! the maid,
Upon the lone rock o'er the deep,
With tears and clasped hands, must still
Her hopeless, weary, weary vigil keep.

No sail, no shallop, not a skiff,
Not even a bird from that far land,
For all her dreams, hath come to her,
With sweet, sly song,—with token from his hand.

Shadows fall round, mists from the main,
Like Fingal's heroes rear themselves :
The lifting tide glugs in the rock,
Or washes drearily the far-off shelves.

O'er the worn sun the black clouds close ;
All darkles chilly to the night ;
But still, from 'tween the closing clouds,
There gleams athwart the deep a sickly light,

Like glare from dying lion's eye,
Whose blood crimson the distant sea,—
His mighty paw, his glancing claw,
Still stretched, still strained—the clouds close frowningly.

And hark ! the maid, up-rising wild,
Upon the rock, with hot tears blind,
In words of her beloved land,
Thus throws out her moan to the chill night-wind.—

Eerie, eerie, alone, alone,
 Dreary, dreary, alone, alone !
 O will he not come ? O will he not come
 To my cold, cold home, to my cold, cold home ?
 So cheerless the plash
 Of the comfortless sea,
 So fearful the flash
 From his eye fitfully !
 Like the hand of a ghost,
 The night lifts my hair ;
 Like the cry of the lost,
 Flits a wail through the air !
 Eerie, eerie, dreary, dreary,
 Alone, alone—alone, alone !
 O will he not come ? O will he not come
 To my cold, cold home, to my cold, cold home ?

PART II.

NIGHT, awful, on yon island-tower,
 Now falleth as the dew doth fall ;
 While, slowly-gliding, pale moonshine
 Leaves rich its lily mantle on the wall.

Sole watch to guard that lone castell,
 The sea its steps doth nightly tell
 Upon the beach. Hark ! its great *reh* *
 Bays now, voice of a giant sentinel.

What solid calm ! deep silentness,
 Up stairs, in rooms, through galleries,
 Lurks, like a presence, motionless,
 Dumb, sulky, huge, with heavy half-shut eyes.

The fire upon the hearth is dead ;
 The roof is sullen, which, in glee,
 Was as a giant overhead,
 Ho-ho-ing to the laughter lustily.

* *Reh* : the *e* here is the *e* in the word *debt*, sounded very long.

The wassail in the hall is dead,
Where stilly moonshine maketh way,
O'er cup and goblet overthrown,
So fairy-like 'mid revel disarray.

Drugged with fatigue, with feast and ale,
Both chief and vassal slumber deep ;
And, far apart, in secret bower,
Pale Merla is shut, like a flower, in sleep.

To see thee, Flower ! thy delicate leaves
All folded, fragrant, one in one,
The amorous night, breathless, throbs near,
Half-scared by the light from thy beauty thrown.

There palpitates to see thee hid
But partly, like a warm young bride,
Beneath the clinging coverlid ;
And tremblingly neighbours thy glowing side.

But back ! Perchance an arm may stray,
A bosom in its innocence :
Shut thy bad eyes, O Night ! nor feed
On the sweets of her sleeping negligence !

And see ! as one who walks in fear
Of instant spring from ambushed foe,
But, fretting at the base restraint,
Shakes ever and anon his plume of snow,

Whose stirréd pride, elastic, lifts
Itself in graceful haughtiness,
Stalwart and stately steppeth slow,
A knight—a knight in arméd quietness.

He stops beneath the maiden's bower :
'Tis he, 'tis he, from far Scotlánd !
With deep voice curbed, he breathes her name ;
But sweet her dreams—she will not understand.

His voice to lattice murmuring up,
Seems gently tapping, softly calling her ;
Now floats it through her still chambér,
Nor wakes—like lullaby, still lulling, lulling her.

For through the portals of her ears,
Those tones—like faint breeze murmuring on
Through caves, whose watch-dogs echoes are—
All softly to her slumbering brain have gone.

Like touch on magic talisman,
All lightly on her brain they smite,
Smite, and a thousand dreams up-spring,
Purple and gold, round him, her stately knight,

Many and beautiful as buds,
All crimson-white round summer tree,
When the blast in his hand hath ta'en
The stem, and shaken it to make him glee.

She hears, but 'tis in dreams she hears
That voice to sweet words consecrate :
Plays on her face a smile serene
From wavy mouth to eyelids delicate.

But louder, louder calls the knight,—
Too loud : shivered the tal'sman lies,
The purple scenes, the golden shapes
Are vanished, fled, like clouds at morning rise.

That voice ! she starts—her ear drinks night.
'Twas but the sea, a breaking billow,
She fears within herself, but, hushed,
She listens still, all breathless on her pillow.

No motion moveth arm or limb,
No motion moveth lip or eye :
Even like a statue, marble, dim,
The maid, on snowy arm uprist, doth lie.

• That voice !—With speed she springeth up,
With speed full chastely doth she cover
With virgin-white her virgin breast,
So full of joy !—trembling to meet her lover.

She opes the door,—she listens there,—
Hears nought but pulsing of the night :
Into the hush she steps, heart-awed,
Into the hush, alone, with footing light.

Than adder in her day-lit path,
A stirréd rush can fright her more :
Convulsively her breath is held,
And clenched her hand, as creaks the ancient floor.

But slowly, cautious, step by step,
She glides through these old passages :
Whispers are near, and things of fear,
Creatures of night, dim, flickering phantasies.

Abrupt she stops, with failing heart,
Against a form encountering her :
'Tis but a fear ! Again she glides,
Her garments heavy in the enamoured air.

A streak of white that moveth dim
In the bosom of night, she seems ;
Now bursts she out all spirit-bright,
As she lifts from the floor the crook'd moonbeams.

She reaches now her father's door ;
His robust breathing meets her ear :
Ah, round the loving daughter's heart,
Comes clinging grief, regret, foreboding fear.

He sighs—he coughs—he seems to wake !
Has sprung the maid like startled fawn,
Has bounded down the castle-stair,
Stands now beside her lover on the lawn.

'Aidan !'—'Merla !'—They rush, embrace :
Ah happy, happy, happy twain !
They part to see each other's face :
They rush into each other's arms again.

'Ha—a, my Merla, mine—mine—mine !
In spite of stern fathér I've come,
With boat on shore, with rowmen four :
Like happy birds we will sweep to our home !'

'What, Aidan, will my father say
To this, to-morrow, when he wakes,
And finds his child, me—me—away—
Fled cruel me—the child his joy that makes ?

‘ My Aidan, it will break his heart ;
O doubt not but I love thee well ;
But can I from my father part,
When well I know that word would be his knell ?’

What loving maiden may resist
The gentle weight of loving hand ?
What loving maiden may resist
Love’s fondling notes—love’s cooing lippings bland ?

One arm around her waist is thrown,
One hand draws hers in gentleness ;
Her head droops back, but, step by step,
She yields—yields in unwilling willingness.

In other days, upon the shore,
As oft they wandered hand in hand,
So now, rich shapes beneath the moon,
They glimmer onward o’er the silver sand.

Within a creek the boat is found,
A firm, light skiff, with rowmen four ;
Obedient they to lift the maid,
And follow swiftly from the perilous shore.

Right handily they set themselves
To pull ; one hearty stroke gives each ;
The boat at once leaps to their touch,
Out to the sea, away from off the beach.

As chief becometh, Aidan sways
The helm ; exulting, to his breast,
With one free arm, he strains the maid,
And holds her folded like a bird in nest.

With hearty effort to the stroke,
The men bend back and fore, and white
Their faces are by turns, and dark,
As they lift and droop in the pale moonlight.

The rowlocks play, the ripples laugh,
The wet oars shine and radiance scatter ;
Beneath the stars the lonely boat
Speeds to the lily-garment on the water.

She shakes the tear-drops from her eyes,
And she rises from Aidan's side,
But once again to see the isle
And pale castell, she leaves upon the tide.

'Aidan, Aidan ! what do I see ?
Look yonder, yonder on the shore !
See ! lights are waving hurriedly
Among the rocks where stands my father's tower !

' They search for me, they search for me !
Our footsteps in the sand they'll trace ;
They'll follow us—these fierce rough men
Will murder thee—murder, before my face !'

Proud rose young Aidan in the boat,
And shook his haughty locks in scorn :
' Ay, let them search, and let them chase,
They'll overtake the wind before the morn,

' But never us ! From isle to isle,
No boat will match our wherry steady ;
Or let them come—ha-a my men,
What then ? our hearts and hands are bold and ready.'

Fierce gleam the eyes of these rowmén ;
They grasp their swords, the scabbards rattle ;
Their broad chests heave ; they shake their necks,
And laugh ha, ha ! like steed that snuffeth battle.

—They find the footsteps in the sand,
They track them downward to the water ;
They launch their boats, they follow fast :
The stern old man must overtake his daughter.

' We'll laugh their lazy hulks to scorn ;
Our little skiff shall give them play ;
Put all your strength upon the stroke,
And tug amain,—give way, my men, give way !'

All white the waves hiss from the prow,
And ever, underneath the side,
With rip—rip—ripple regular,
And rush anon, unceasing knocks the tide.

In furrow of the keel behind,
Small whirling drops of light are seen ;
The stirred waters churm and hiss
In foamy patch, where'er the oars have been.

The rowers back and forward bend,
The rowlocks sound, the wherry shatters,
Still forward as it springs alert,
The lily garment peaceful on the waters.

The knight, on one side, at the stern,
Looks to the isle, across the tide :
He steers, and so at times must turn
Forward, and to the stars, the boat to guide.

They row and row, these good rowmén,
The wherry light ne'er slackens pace ;
Across the flood, towards the isle,
Still Aidan looks—Merla in Aidan's face.

And now an hour these men have rowed,
Nor of a foe appeareth sign ;
The chieftain calls to breathe a space,
Refresh themselves with rest, and food, and wine.

Well-pleased, at once they draw their oars ;
They wipe their brows, their broad chests play :
The oars are tilted 'neath the brim,
But still the willing wherry speeds away.

And now, 'tis rest and idleness ;
Forth now, their srips the rowmen bring,
Well-stored with toothsome food nor less
With wine and stronger liquor gladdening.

The little skiff hath ceased to speed,
Rocks gently on the rippling sea ;
The tilted oar-blades, shining roll,
Down-dipping, two by two, alternately.

The rowmen with their horny hands,
In fitting mouthfuls break their bread;
They drink the lovers happiness,
Long life, health, wealth, and children to their bed.

[And now we may drop, for a little, the veil upon them, there so well-employed. The tale of the adventure immediately further is told in verses fully too bald for repetition. The reader, indeed, has but too much reason to believe this in the bare and quaint reality of what he has already seen. These last verses, especially, exhibit such character almost in caricature; and they would only, in this respect, have been capped, had we quoted, that even 'the twain' did not despise 'such bounteous banquet then and there,' for—'keen and sharp at all times is, beneath the sky, at sea the hungry air!' So far as what follows in the story is concerned, it will be sufficient for us to conceive the enemies' three boats at length heaving in sight with sail and oar; all three working to windward of 'the wherry'—all three of them closing in upon it. Aidan, on seeing the state of the case, puts his boat into the wind's eye, and rows it so. He thus throws out and considerably distances his pursuers, who lose way and time in hauling down, lowering, and stowing away their canvas, masts, and tackle. An exciting chase ensues, the heavier boats behind making up by number of oars what they want in lightness of hull. They gradually overreach and draw in upon the wherry, whose occupants are fain at last to draw sword and stand upon the defensive. Aidan and his four followers have already foiled and beaten off the two forward boats, having strongly struck down with half a dozen sturdy strokes as many of their crews; but the third boat is rapidly coming up astern, and Aidan hesitates what to do, for it is the white-haired old man himself who stands grim in the bows, and is already stooping to seize his daughter. It is now, however, that an appalling cry bursts upon the ear, and every arm drops, suddenly palsied, while every heart beats terror-stricken, and they look around them aghast. A fearful spectacle meets their sight. There, but a few hundred yards from them, 'welk and wave' in the air the horns of what these mariners dread most, the Kraken—there in reality of monstrous mass before them, as they have often heard it described, of a winter evening by the fire. Suddenly and at once, the boats experience a stampede; as though but a bundle of cats, into the centre of which a stone has been thrown, with instantaneous dispersion. In vain the old man threatens them, seizes them, shakes them, strikes them, lastly pleads with them. The panic-stricken crews will only obey their own fears and row with all their might, keeping the monster at their stern,—seeing nothing else, thinking of nothing else. A like fear has seized the crew of Aidan, and they drive their agitated wherry with a like unreasoning hasty force along, losing sight presently, as they had already all thought, of the boats which had pursued and well-nigh captured them. Aidan himself in the stern of his wherry, can only take the maid into his arms, and bend as though protectingly over

her. As the distance increases between them and the vast brute,
'hornéd and monstrous on the midnight tide,' their courage revives,
and they return nearer to a more ordinary frame of mind.]

A feverish chuckle of delight
(He cannot choose, it sits so high),
Breaks, sputtering out from one rowmán,
That yet they'll give the black brute the go-by.

'Does he not sink?' another cries.
'Not he, not he, he has not stirred!'
Blinding himself, the first replies:
'Row hard, and never mind!' exclaims a third.

Ah yes! he sinks. The mighty mass
Is slowly, slowly disappearing;
The sea around grows clear as glass,
Towards the spot he leaves all smoothly steering.

Bubbling, churming, white and hissing,
Full soon, its speed, the stirr'd main quickens;
Waves rise and dash o'er one another;
Tossing, whirling, the boiling ferment thickens.

All fiercely hot, and glowing now,
(No more, no more, despair is cool!)
They strain their oars with racking strength,
And rise from off the thwarts to every pull.

They tug and tug with desperate force,
The boiling waves dash o'er the prow.
The bounding oars are curved and bent—
Snap! two of them are broken at one blow.

One oar is shifted in a trice,
And two urge on each oar remaining;
The waves the charréd rowlocks quench,
The wherry cracks, rent with such fearful straining.

From aching brow to burning cheek,
In vain, in vain the toil drops pour;
'Gainst that strong surge, they could not urge
The boat, light as it is, with ten for four.

They yield, they yield : they cease the strife,
Their useless oars they throw away ;
The strong men, desperate of life,
Lift up their eyes in silentness, and pray.

The knight bends peaceful o'er the maid,
Who hides her face, his neck upon ;
And thus, in attitude of love,
Their spirits bow in prayer before the throne.

The sea is cloven to its depths,
In middle of the white turmoil,
There where the whirlpool's black throat gapes,
Round which, for miles, the stirréd waters boil.

The fear-struck waters eddy round,
Around, around the charmed edge ;
And, gurgling, down the black sides glide,
Drawn smoothly-lucent in a wormy ridge.

Surging in cradle of the seas,
Around the fatal gulf careering,
The little wherry snorts and quivers,
In circles less and less, fast nearing—nearing !

It skims the brink—the stern bends in,
It disappears within the tide ;
The waters howl, and hiss, and roar,
Tumultuous, round Aidan and his bride.

And now the monster's million arms,
Sliding and crawling, creeping round,
Like loathsome worms, in slimy folds,
All slippery, about the crew are wound.

[Of course all this ought to have been burned ; but while we indignantly feel so, it may be consolatory to reflect that it will come pretty well to the same thing in the end—and before long !]

PART III.

THE black gulf closes ; and the waves,
Whose charmed stir and fierce commotion
Tore the great deep, fade by degrees,
And disappear. The gloom-browed, surly ocean,

Settling himself, and muttering
At this disturbance of his rest,
Sinks sulkily to peace again,
Wearing the foam of battle on his crest.

Outworn with struggle of the fight,
At length he sleeps ; his ruffled face
Smooths to a smile, and the big coil
Hath passed, nor leaveth of itself one trace.

No trace ! see yonder, something floats—
By heaven ! it is young Aidan brave,
He holds an oar, around the neck
Of her, the maid, one arm is clasped to save.

[Here is an escape that may appear incredible ; but, as has been already hinted, there are very good reasons in existence why the reader should implicitly trust in the information of the writer, who, until the contrary has been proved to him, will unhesitatingly stand by the certainty of his facts. And how, here, can there be any talk of proof ? If no one can prove anyone's death as due to the Kraken, how can anyone prove the impossibility of an escape from him ? It is quite enough for us that Aidan and Merla have escaped.

Without further apology for young extravagance, I shall let the thing go on now, pretty well uninterruptedly to the end.

We are to understand, then, that Merla has returned to consciousness, and that Aidan, seeing land before him, is not without hope of speedily reaching it by aid of such swimming as the case allows, while he still holds the oar and supports the maid.]

Above them is the starry sky,
And, stately there, the full moon walking ;
As mother with her sleeping babes,
The sea is calm, the twain all gently rocking.

Before them there, and just at hand,
All pale in beauty of the moon,
A little isle doth sweetly smile,
Beckoning them on to harbours halcyon.

With one hand round each other's neck,
And one grasping the helpful oar,
They float all gently on the sea
Towards the isle, edged with its sandy shore.

Behind, and up above the isle,
The blue-rimmed moon drops, visibly,
Aslant the white and sparkling beach,
Her richest robe of silvery purity.

And there the dark rocks further back,
Are painting on that mantle fair,
The quaintest figures, grim, and black,
With locks that stir and flicker in the air.

And still they float them gently on,
On to the shore, there, straight before,
With one hand fondly clasped around
Each other's neck, and one upon the oar.

Gliding in beauty of the moon,
Soft-steals a sly sylph fitfully,
Stirring the waters with light feet,
And scattering them in radiance sportfully.

Sated with sport, the loose-haired sprite
Grows wild at length, grows fierce in glee ;
As child, brow-pained with toys it loves,
Rushes, breaking and tearing frettedly.

Now, with a shriek, she quits her game ;
Away, away, on swift wing flees :
For, in the west, black-lower afar
Huge clouds, all sullen-sailing in the breeze.

Mass upon mass of tawny cloud,
Stately, majestic, move up heaven ;
All coldly on their way they shroud
Star after star, as on and on they're driven.

And darker grow the lovers' fears,
As onwards swell those masses grim :
With each sweet star that disappears,
The light of hope becomes more dim, more dim.

Swifter and swifter do they fly,
Their giant-horror shown more plain,
As fast they near the middle sky,
All overflowed with light, the moon's domain.

To shapes and figures passing strange,
The wild witch Fancy's forming eye
Those clouds can change, and give to range,
In pride of life and strength, throughout the sky.

Grim in the van, a huge brown cloud,
Haughty, leads on the gloomy bands,
In very shape of lion proud,
Rampant, upreared, with horrent paw that stands.

The lion-cloud, with life-like scowl,
Sullen, majestic, ramps along :
Was it the thunder gave that growl,
Or was't the 'brool' of that proud lion strong?

He presses on, and swiftly speeds
Towards the light-o'erflowed domain,
And, lofty in the van, still leads
Up, o'er the starry blue, his sulky train.

Though fast upon her throne they press,
The gentle moon is sweetly smiling,
All meek, in maiden loveliness,
Their sulky sullenness to beauty wiling.

But now the lion-cloud is near,
His strained claws are on her face,
And seem triumphantly to bear
The helpless queen, unstruggling, from her place.

But beauty's charms the fiercest heart
Can, unresisting, bend and sway ;
And as the moon's sweet glances dart,
The brute, even in her beauty, melts away.

But blacker, thicker clouds succeed ;
Relentless-driving in the blast,
Her pale face trampling, on, with speed,
Confusedly rush those ruffians past.

[The lovers see all these signs with sad distrust, and Aidan, though redoubling his exertions, can hardly dare to whisper a hope, the rather that he begins to lose sight of the friendly little isle, and that nothing he says can now rouse Merla, etc.]

For coming tempest seems to call
The tribes of nature into life ;
Yea, all around, eyes glare on eyes,
And breath is held anticipant of strife.

Slunk to himself, the Sea is laid,
Beneath the Night, huge, black, and high,
Like brute but partly vanquished,
Beneath his foe, who stands contemptuous by :

Even like a brute beneath a man,
Lifting a red eye now and then,
But, quailing to the eye he meets,
Compelled to let it fall in fear again ;

Grovelling upon the blood-stained ground,
All his huge strength without avail,
Crouching in rage and dread at once,
Lashing his shuddering sides with restless tail ;

Catching his groan subduedly ;
Through moist, dilated nostril red
All soiled and foaming in the dust, [head !
Snorting quick mist-wreaths round his lengthened

Above him there, the Night stands glooming,
Gathering her brows in wrathful-wise,
Muttering in thunder huskily,
Darting her scorn in lightnings from her eyes.

Maddened, impatient at constraint,
His vast sides heaving in huge throes,
Bounding, at length up-springs the Sea,
And shakes his mane, defiant of his foes.

The Night is all one living blaze
Of fury that the slave rebel,
And, conquered once, dare her again ;—
Resolved at once his insolence to quell,

Collecting all her strength, she hurls
Her hot shafts plunging in his side,
Her indignation and revenge,
With ponderous din, she thunders far and wide.

Blasts, in the war, like harpies, flee ;
They flap their wings in th' eyes of Night,
Dig with sharp claws the Ocean's sides,
Tear his white hair, and goad him to the fight.

Then away, away, up, aha !
Screaming, shrieking, in agony
Of fiercest joy and horrid glee,
Coiled in such clasps the roused twain to see.

Deserted of all help within,
The Firmament howls wild, while pour
The fear-drops, swiftly and at once,
Heavy and thick, in one continuous shower.

—But where are they, the gentle ones ?
Ah luckless twain ! ye cannot roam
Amid this awful battle-stoure ;
Ye must have found beneath the sea a home.

But no ! look there ! is it not they ?
That toppling wave will sink and then—
Yes, see ! yonder they sweep aloft—
On the white crest—into the gulf again !

—The morning comes ; the storm-clouds pass ;
Smiles gaily forth the blue serene ;
The sea is cradled in sweet sleep,
And all is calm, nought tells that strife has been.

Nought, nought but that that lies so still,
Yonder upon the wave-smoothed sand,
And that—and that—vain words, vain words !
Ah damp, and dank, and dead, upon the strand !

Yes, dead upon the beach they lie,
Still fondly clasped, a fond, fond pair ;
Their dead arms round each other's neck,
And his wan face veiled by her golden hair.

With head bent down upon his hands,
Which on one upraised knee are laid,
Beside them kneels another form,
Clasping so mournfully her cold hand dead.

Ay, sure enough, the rough old man
At length has overta'en his daughter !
Apart from these, his vassal train
Is seen upon the beach beside the water.

Of broken boats a fire is made,
Behind a sheltering promontory ;
They dry their arms, they dry their food,
And talk in whispers of the dreary story.

He stayeth long, their rough old chief,
They feel uneasy ; one and all,
With reverent mien, approach the spot ;
They call : the old man will not heed their call.

They speak again :—no word, no sign !
They shake him then : alas ! they shake
A corpse ! And through his silver hairs,
So mockingly, the heedless breezes wake !

Hast thou not failed me, Muse?
I fear, I fear!—weak feeble me!
I grieve me for the prayer presumptuous
I dared, ere this poor song began, to lift to thee.

And said I then, meek maid,
Of lovers when I sing and love,
Me with a breath impregn not heretofore
Bestowed on whom thy holy presence wont to move?

And said I, give not me,
Inflate, to sing by breath reflect
From other bard, but by straight gust from heaven,
Uneffortéd, unborrowed thine, primal, direct?

Vain, silly, to believe
In puny cup of mine could burn
The sacred fire decreed to keep alive,
From century to century, only in chosen urn.

Methinks thy presence would
Only have shrivelled up frail me,
Even as the unveiled glory of the god,
Granting her wish, shrivelled up hapless Semele.

Was't then, so wrong to wish
That spirits of the sea, sky, earth
Should, honouring me as son of thine,
Breathe on the lyre within and shake its music forth?

Ah no! Yet will I deem
Not wholly vain this song of mine,
Not wholly vain this poor, weak song, but still
Streaked, though at intervals, with thy own voice
divine!

SLEEPING BEAUTY.*

I. THE ISLAND.—ARIEL.

‘YES, it is even as thou sayest, Ariel : we lie all awry, twisted, contorted, crushing one another ; and our eldest brother, Adler, with those, our brethren, next to him, who have become his baser factors, flatterers and followers, tread on us—but with a double hurt—to us first, but also to themselves. They bruise our head : we bruise their heel. O mother, mother ! why rear us up so numerous, and then die?’

‘Hush, Haiarno ! our mother is not dead, but sleepeth.’

‘Yea, Ariel, such sleep as may not wake again. Ah, no ! she will awake no more ! Oh never more ! For ever shall we writhe, as now, under and over one another, stinging and being stung, crushing and being crushed, weltering miserable in a chaos of sick life !’

‘Never, Haiarno, never will I believe it ! Never will I believe such pain, and misery, and sin eternal. There comes a resurrection of the beautiful. Our mother *will* awake. She must—she will. I know it, and I see it.’

‘O Ariel ! would it were so ! O that my mother might awake and see this wretchedness ! Could she but see me as I stand—worn, wasted, haggard,—my thin, blue cheek engrained with the small black veins that break thereon, channelled by the sweat of toil, nor less, perchance, by the charmed liquor that our brother Comus brews for us—my skin in cracks and crusts—my bones bent, bowed, distorted—my exhausted sinews drawn into visible cords ! Nor yet so thoroughly exhausted, nor yet so wholly drained, O sinews ! Drawn—drained ! Aye indeed, well drawn, well drained ! Yes,—with a bitter smile I see it and I say it—these cars and chariots of pride that thunder mid our cots and cottages, when Adler, with his parasites, hath deigned to take the air—those huge clouds—those mighty pageants

* From *Truth Seeker Magazine* for 1849 ; but, at least first part, was written in 1845.

of pleasure—that float upon our lakes with fire and flame to drive them—have they not been dragged and drawn even from the very pith of these lean sinews? The garment that enwrappeth him, is it not woven of our brother's flesh? These cushions of his luxury, purple and exuberant, are they not moulded of our brother's blood? These halls and palaces—these piles of masonry that touch the clouds—their supporting columns—are they not these very bones? Ay,—and more bitter is my smile—are they not cemented with our sin—*my* sin—*thy* sin, Adler—the sin that thou hast caused in me by thine? And is there not a curse upon them? Are they not permeated by a spell that makes them agony—despair—crime? Thou hast trampled on me—trod me under foot—chained me in mountain-bowels—shut me up with toads, and ravening rats, and dropping waters, and exploding fire—forced me to ransack all fountains, lakes, and rivers, to heap the wherewithal to glut thy phantasy. Thou hast drained my vitals to the dregs, till I stand even thus—naked, and thin, and dwarfed, and ignorant, and criminal. But with what to thee, with what to thee, has all this work been done—with what to thee? The draught, has it not been poison? These cars and chariots—these pageants on the lakes—these blood-moulded cushions—these piles of masonry that touch the clouds—weigh they not upon thy head, thy heart, with a weight stooping thee to hell? Ay, flee, flee! Flee to the drugged cup of thy brother Comus! Flee to broil and battle with the beasts of the field or the fowls of heaven! Or better—fiercer far—flee to broil and battle with thy own kind and kindred! Cut—stab—hack—hew thy brother! Bathe in his glowing blood! Clothe in his steaming entrails!—Ah! ah!—still is there no rest—no peace—no cool!’

‘Unhappy! Oh unhappy! Haiarno, thy words are as agonizing fire! Me, me! woe is me! that truth is in them! I passed the workshop—the chill, damp cell—in which our brother Euplocus sits weaving. I saw him there—diseased, dwarfed, famished; and, even as I looked and listened, the very voice and actual utterance of his loom did seem, Revenge! But, O Haiarno! lift not thou thy hand against thy brother Adler! Are there not pain and sin enough:

wilt thou add to them? Wilt thou become the thing thou hatest? Wouldst thou be Adler, and make him Haiarno?—Think! Patience! Hast thou not revenge even now? Saidst thou not, the very work thou dost is as a weight stooping him to hell? That very work, is it not swiftly, surely, bringing thee deliverance?’

‘Ariel, mistake me not! Hand of mine shall never fall on Adler. His own sin consume him! My own virtue right me! Nor am I yet so shorn of pleasure. There is still some soothment for me—still some solace in my lot, hard though it be. There is joy in the cup of Comus—joy in the robust laugh, the unmistakeable jest, the uproarious hilarity of my fellow drudges in that short evening hour that gives us privilege to meet, not for vain repinings and condolings—not for insane and sinful conclave of rebellion—but to support, and cheer, and gladden one another! Ay, Ariel, drudge—slave—helot as I am—laughter can come to me. Of my very misery I can make a butt; I can mock my grief; I can wring mirth from agony; I can shake my fetters into joyful noises. What gushing fountains of amusement are not these lean muscles to me! Lean, thin, shrunken they are: but fruitful are their wombs, teeming their bellies. Ariel! Canst thou not see—almost with thine actual eye—rising, like a birth, out of their fibres, those crowns, and coronets, and stars, and cups, and chalices of price, that fling lightly from hand to hand the jocund sparkle of the peeping sun what time he lightens up the pride of Adler? Lean muscles! Canst thou not see them teeming—swelling—overflowing like a Nilus—depositing their multitudinous freight, their all-prolific stores? See, rising from them, innumerable as herbs that spring and spread upon the unsightly bosom of the earth, the points, tags, tassels, and adornments that deck the trappings and caparisons of the steed of Adler! See his hunting-spear,—the gewgaws and the spectacles of Dohl, Pol’s reed-trump, and the bells of Fol,—the sword and shield of Goups, Mochyn’s toothpick, and the looking-glass of Peod,—Corbo’s penknife, and the manacles of Milan,—nor less, the shoebuckles and plain finger-ring of that respectable, clean-handed, clean-shirted, well-regulated personage, our brother, Volp! In profuse

luxury, spawning from them, like broods of countless crocodiles rising and living from the desert sands, see Taenia's spindles and the vats of Comus, Aragno's shuttles and the pans of Meliss, the implements of Getes, Scalops' strong-box, Sacrate's symbol, Erro's hook, the casket, gems, and precious stones of Chrysourg ! Now, showering from them, see the rain that fell on Danaë—those enchanting counters—whereby, as by the signet of a god, Adler and the rest have power to take unto themselves all flowers, plants, trees that suck the bosom of the earth on plain or mountain,—all animals that crop the blade, or lurk in jungles,—all handiworks of man,—and man himself—their brother ! Lean sinews ? Ha ! rather, are they not exhaustless laughing-stocks, "fellows of infinite jest," repertories of endless merriment ? Poor am I then ? Who shall say so ? I, with thews which are Aladdin-lamps to stock a universe—I, who thus rain upon the ground "Barbaric pearls and gold"—I, without whom the pomp of Adler vanishes in air, leaving him lone, naked, defenceless—who again will strike—trample—tread me under foot ? The slave of Adler ! His drudge—his helot ! No, by the gods ! I am his lord, his master. The Island is not his. 'Tis mine—mine and Euplocus's ! Look to thy shuttle, Euplocus ! See it carrying round and round thy brethren those marvellous threads, wrapping them in warmth or luxury ! See this : and reverence thyself ! Come ! let us sit and joke together. Let us muffle up our griefs—choke them in flowers of frolic—bury them in fun ! Come ! we will prattle of ourselves ! Come ! we will babble and believe the island ours, and we the kings of it !

'Haiarno ! bitter are thy jests ; thy smiles sardonic. O, wax not into wrath ! Let not indignation and revenge kindle thee to hate and wickedness. Let not malice salt, nor blood defile, the sweet, clear waters of thy long-suffering wisdom. Fuel for the flame is scattered all around. Beware the spark ! Beware ! even as thou valuest that which thou seekest ! As the oak springeth from the acorn, the hazel from the hazel-nut ; so does good rise out of good, evil out of evil. Each seed feeds his own kind. Maize grows not on the Upas-tree. Leaves of the Sumach fall not from the ear of corn. The Plantain flourishes on the tree of Good :

Apples of Discord on the tree of Evil. Hold on! Hold from! Ours shall the day be: theirs is but the night. I will believe it. *Beauty is not dead, but sleepeth.* Our mother will awake, arise, and give, as heretofore, her lustre into keeping of the spongy air, till man shall be transfigured, and shall bloom in beauty of the angels; our bare mountains shall resume their antique robes of filmy glory: and above our lakes, white clouds, upcurdled in the invisible air, shall brood in brighter loveliness. As of old, when angels were our guests and the hosts of heaven mingled with us, "pipes in the liberal air" shall soothe our flocks. Again shall "the isle be full of noises, sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not." Again, a united brotherhood, we shall sit down in peace together—*all at work, yet all at leisure*—peopling the waste with voices—making the wilderness rejoice in flowers—extracting the nobler from the baser—transmuting the surplus and excess of food we lay up for the body into the more precious food divine that feeds our spirits, transmuting food of earth to food of heaven, corn and wine to nectar and ambrosia—piercing the mysteries of this enchanted island—doing the hests of our great mother—weaving songs of praise and rearing altars crowned with flowers or odorous flames, in incense to our far-Father—living on earth only to live in heaven. Shall not this be, Haiarno? Speak! Shall it not be? *It shall.*

'No, no, no! dream no more, Ariel! Thou art a thing compact of dreams. And yet how balmy are these dreams which Adler may not bar a chance, stray visit, like glimpses of the sun, even to this poor, clouded brain of mine! Ah no! it cannot be. There come no messengers from God to man. Angels have deserted us. Our father has gone far, far. Our mother, she is dead. We are abandoned orphans, wicked and miserable.'

'Thou art blind, Haiarno! Thy very wickedness has blinded thee. Else, not rarely, mightst thou see smiles of our mother, Beauty, gleaming from her secret sleeping-place, like moonlight, on our bewildered doings. She is not dead! She is not dead! *Yet* are her footsteps glowing on the earth! By fountain and by river, in dell and wilderness, the splendour is yet alive that from her garment dropped.

Adler and his parasites have not yet wholly blurred the glory of her informing trail. I will arise. I will shake the dust of idleness from my feet. I will gird my loins up to the enterprise. I will go forth, and seek our mother where haply she hath lain down apart from us to sleep. I will awake her. Haiarno ! I will awake her. I have a tongue of fire, a brain of images, and a heart of dew. I will awake her. She will return. All shall be well. This instant will I forth.'

'Alas, poor dreamy Ariel ! My little fountain of the gentlest lymph of love ! how little knowest thou the task thy brain is all a-flame about ! Is it so easy then to leave the hearth where hitherto thou hast been fed, and warmed, and fostered ? Are roofs and fires, cupboards and garments, then so plentiful ? Will manna, as of old, rain from heaven on thee ?—the dry rock gape and gush to fill thy water-cruise ? Will of himself the Sable bring to thee his coat of fur ? Or will the Silkworm weave thee one ? Are then the hills and plains all open to thee ?—thine as much as Adler's ? Where are his guards ? How shall you pass them ? Where is thy scrip ? Hast thou store of counters in thy girdle wherewith thou mayest glut his insatiate, million myrmidons, that, vigilant as the hounds of hell, do watch each avenue—outlet or inlet—claiming, under a thousand different names, by a thousand different devices, tax and toll of thee ? Without a counter, how canst thou even live ?'

'Haiarno ! food and raiment will be denied us nowhere. Few are the wants of health : disease can find no larger large enough. Small is the scrip that virtue needs : 'tis vice that cannot get sufficient store of counters to be safe withal.'

'Thou art a strange being, Ariel ! From thy youngest years, thou hast been all unlike thy fellows. Placed amid the factors—that superfluous and corrupted medium betwixt Adler, with his retinue, and us, the helots—fed on their gluttonous aliment—nursed in all their sleepy indolence—how unlike them art thou ! To thee, the strong-box and the increasing hoard—the swiftly swelling counter-heap—offered no charms. What to thee were all their petty spites and envies, their pitiful jealousies, pitiful rivalries—their striving, each to outshine the other in coat or hat, in sump-

tuousness of dinner, in fashion of a ring, or pattern of a shoebuckle? With their constrained and wily-purposed speech and motion, thy light laugh and lighter carriage sorted not. Life to thee was something more than a vain showing-off of airs and dresses. Their proud frowns and insolent questionings—their cruel spurnings—remorseless turnings of the back—their icy looks, darting like chill spears upon our woes—but ill accorded with thy fast-dropping tears—thy wild, soft heart—thy words like balm—thy liberal hand—thy swift rush of sudden indignation. Yea, Ariel ! thou art all unlike the rest of us. With us, the weeds, the abjects of the island, thou hast been almost a playmate. Thy kindly ways, spontaneous, unaffected courteousness, thy genial frankness, and thy laughing words, fell like sunshine on us, cheering, delighting. Thou hast never had the least glimpse of thought that thou wert different from us. We were thy equal brothers. Thou hast sat, at home and happy, on our greasy stools, amid the dust and ashes of our hearths. Thou hast talked, and laughed, and quaffed the cup of Comus with us. With thy meaning looks, and strangely penetrating words, and sunny pleasantries, thou hast been to all a joy and a delight, an aid, a help, a love. Nay, even dumb beasts do follow thee with love. No dog but fawns on thee. The steed trembles with delight as thou approachest. Puss hath no dearer perch than knee of thine. The ox, as thou speakest to him, seems mitigated and intelligent. The linnet shivers his little plumes, peeps his little head oblique, and carols lustier in thy presence. On none but Adler and his parasites, has the sneer of scorn descended ; has a proud eye been turned, or a proud lip curled. None but the drones—the factors—the unnecessary mean—hast thou stretched upon the rack of sarcasm. Yet familiar as thou art, and all accessible to the meanest, we feel, we know, thou art above us. Thou hast indeed a tongue of fire, a brain of images, and a heart of dew. Thou hast the eye to see withal : for are not all of us, from Adler and the rest, down to the poor Haiarno and the poorer Euplocus, but as machines in crystal to thee ? Thou hast the power to make thy dreams realities. The treasures of the world could bribe thee to no lie ; the powers of darkness could not bend thee

to injustice ; earth and hell could not force thee from thy purpose. Thou hast the subtlety to plan. Thine is the soul to dare, the heart to lead thy fellows. Thou, so different from all—so immeasurably superior to all—canst thou err in this, thy strong belief, that Beauty liveth? Shall I, a mean and despicable worm, dare hold debate against thee? I see—I see! It must be so! Thou must be right. *Thou* hast said it : *I* will believe.'

'Haiarno! may thy faith avail thee! Trust in it. Beauty is not dead. I will awake her. She will return.'

'O Ariel! string thyself to this great daring! Think of the bowels of the earth—see me there, far from the voice of day, the breath of heaven, toiling, toiling, evermore toiling! Think of thy brother Euplocus! Think—O think! Fall not into temptation: sleep not by the way. Thou knowest the keenness of thy being: avoid! Beware of Adler and his mates. What fascination would not thy sweet presence be to them! What delight thy pleasant quips, and bubbling merriment, and wild, wild waggeries! Have thou a care, O Ariel! Their delicate food, their enchanted liquor, and their downy luxuries, have power to blot out heaven—have power to crush the lamp and bury the treasure that thou bear'st within. Think what a task thou hast! Think!—O think!'

'Fear not, Haiarno! I will be firm. Hope on! work on!'

'All flesh has corrupted its way upon the island. In Adler there is no hope; in Goups none; in Volp none. Dohl, Pol, Fol, Peod, and Mochyn, are for laughter only. In Taenia there is no hope, nor in Sacrate now. Hope there is none, none—none for thy aggrieved brethren, but in thee, O Ariel! Be thou true to us! Be thou but true unto thyself: thou wilt not fail thy brothers!'

II. ARIEL SETS OUT.

THE clouds that marched so grimly, slowly on us, flinging their heavy shadows on the ground, till all the air wan'd with despair, have paused, loosening into rain; and on the

front of them, like love upon the curse, the quiet rainbow glides. Hairno has set his hope on Ariel; and Ariel has found his mission.

Swiftly the word went abroad in the city that Ariel was going forth to seek their mother; and the thoughts and voices of his brethren awoke around him variously. Most—some walking in the death-in-life of having, and others in the death-and-life of *not* having—had, in a manner, fallen asleep; and they muttered dreamily, as the word came to them, ‘Mother! mother! what mother? We have no mother—have we?’ Many, at the sound, felt as if some unknown talisman were struck within them, calling up perplexingly, as now heard in wakefulness and truth, something long heretofore but heard in dream and phantasy. Visions of the by-gone Eden gleamed unsteadily upon them; forgotten voices murmured in their ears; sounds of familiar melody floated from afar, tasking their memories, melting their hearts. Like a great sea, heavenward they heaved.

Amazed, indignant, Adler heard, but smiled in mockery. Dohl opened wider up his stolid stare. Pol squeaked and threw an antic. Fol reddened to the ears with anger at the fool. Peod, adjusting himself and looking backwards to his heel, drawled out, ‘Ariel! what’s Ariel? is it a bird?’ Volp laughed, ‘Ha, ha! Not bad! A bird! Yes, of the lark sort, I fancy; but we’ll clip his wings, I doubt not,—shall we not, gentlemen?’ Corbo and Milan chuckled.

Aragno, Taenia, and Co., gecked at the youthful foolishness, the raving madness, of the notion. Patronizingly, they explained to him the beauty of divided labour; mentioned the ecstasy of being the only holders in the market; disclosed how counter bred from counter, till the herd—just, by the bye, so many worms shut in cocoons to spin for them—fell down and worshipped, grudging not the sacrifice of body and of soul, so that *they* were wantless. Ariel, however, hearkened not, but issued to the street!

Chrysourg, Meliss, and the rest, stood in their door-ways or leaned across their stalls, affecting to pity him. Erro jostled and hooted him. But Ariel passed on, his eyes upon the ground. Once only he spake, then when the tribe of Simulante, with fierce murmurs, gathered around him. For

Simulante, though he had forgot all of their far father, all of their fair mother, still made pretence of knowing them ; and still had power on many hearts to fill them to the brim with the most frantic malice. Now, as they crowded round him, remonstrating, threatening, denouncing, pressing ever a peculiar lamp upon him, urging him to take it and to walk by it to a large edifice not far distant, where they asserted Beauty was—Ariel paused and spake even thus : ‘ Is then the lamp alive, my brothers ? Is there light in it ? I see it not. Do ye ? Oil, say ye ? Nay, ’tis blood ! That house, which ye do call the house of Beauty—why, look ! the walls have all fallen in ! There is no roof upon it—winds are howling in it—rains are falling in it ! The loveliness and music, that heretofore were as a presence there, are dead. Why look ye to the west, when ’tis in the east that hope arises ? Why follow ye the setting sun, now when with cymbal’s clash and dulcimer, and joyous acclaim of voices, ye should walk over the dewy blades, in beauty of the morning, to meet him as he rises in the east with fresher health and more abounding vigour ? Day goeth down into the west, and from the east night cometh, yet in the east is morning. Up ! Hail ye the orient ! Onwards ! A sun stronger and more glorious will even now burst forth, like a bridegroom, glowing from the bath ! ’

So spake Ariel : but they derided him the more ; and still the more brandished before his eyes the lightless lamp. So Ariel turned and went forth by the gate upon the desert.

Absorbed in the chafe of what had passed, Ariel walked on, unconsciously taking the path that led to the mountains. ‘ In spite of them, I will do them good,’ he muttered ; ‘ in spite of their own selves, I will do them good ! ’

The free air played upon his cheek, like health. His foot, elastic from the springy heath, grew ever lighter. His chest expanded ; every sinew strung itself. Boundless overhead stretched the blue heaven. The mountains rose before him like an ecstasy. The joy of solitude bubbled up within him. Exultation—inspiration—thrilled him like a presence. His cheek flushed ; his eye lightened. He trode upon the winds—he gesticulated—he cried aloud in transport. Unutterable thought found vent in rhapsody. He rolled upon

the grassy earth to make it his. The pebbles in his path, that looked so clear in the keen air, he threw with wild strength on and on before him, still following eagerly with speed to see what mystery they might chance to light on.

By degrees, emotion, quieting itself, fell placidly into liquid dream; and Ariel pressed forward, forward, heedless of all outer circumstance. Suddenly, a voice cried, 'Ariel!' He stopped, he looked, he listened. Only the bare heath lay round him. Was it but fancy then? It must have been: so forward cheerily! Again a voice cried 'Ariel!' he palpitated, but pressed on. A third time rose the name of 'Ariel:' but only the more eagerly pressed Ariel onwards. In an instant, however, a whole host of voices swooped around him, like an exulting, overtaking multitude. The youth stood still in panic; but on this side and on that, they hemmed him in and pressed and swayed him diverse. —'Ho, ho, ho! the man to bring our mother!'—'I vow 'tis little Ariel!'—'To be sure! who did you think it was?'—'Well: in that delicate proportion, graceful symmetry, he has the thew to seize and crush.'—'The thew! ho, ho! the thew!'—'He has always had great weight among us.'—'A strong man! a mighty leader!'—'A daring soul, sirs! look at him!'—'But he wants his mother!'—'He has a brain of images!' 'Ay, ay; stucco ones!' 'There's an eye for you!' 'A clear eye!' 'A penetrating eye!' 'A blue one!' 'No; a green!'

Tumultuously poor Ariel struggled and passionately he strove: but with foes intangible, invisible, all was vain. The teardrops burned upon his eyelids—he staggered, grasped at the air, and fell. For long upon the ground, he lay stunned, torpid, motionless. At length, as from a dream, he raised his head and looked. He was alone upon the barren heath: only the vacant air stood round him, looking on in silence. Then Ariel's voice went up in agony. 'And is it so, my mother? am I thus weak? Ah yes! ah yes! I feel it is so. When spoke I as a man, before the face of man? I am strengthless, purposeless, powerless. I shrink—not slink, I do not slink, sweet mother—I shrink behind my meanest brother. I yield my individuality to every stranger. I cannot lead—Oh no! I cannot lead. The

task was never mine. I am the vine upon the elm—in my bosom there are grapes. I am but the adorning wreath that, loosened from the pillar, tangles the ring.’

So mourned poor Ariel over his own shattered self. ‘I will return,’ he cried, ‘I will return. But to what, O mother? To what, O father, shall I return? One like me I knew that lived a parasite of Adler. And what did Adler make of him? In gorgeous carpets sank his feet. They rode, they drove, they sailed: all was joy! He sang to them; he found for them the words they wanted. They clapped their hands in praise of him; they crowned his head with flowers. He came to know them all; he grew familiar with them; and he spoke his thoughts. He caricatured Dohl and Fol and Peod; he laughed at Pol; he saw through Volp. Quailing to Adler and to Goups, he yet whispered of them. He grew white with revelry and tremulous. He started often and alarmed them with the cry of “Mother!” All hated him: and, at length, they turned him to the street—a drunkard and a driveller! Avert the omen, father! O, let me not be as he was, father!’

‘To what shall I return? Shall I become as Taenia—my face a blotch; my frame a dropsy? Late in the morning shall I get up withered? Duly, over the shoulders of pale young men who all day long are adding and subtracting, shall my important chin arise with supercilious eye then dully puckered to the knowing focus? The grateful lunch, shall it be swallowed greedily? Shall I gossip stentoriously on ‘change, or trifle with a paper pompously? Ah! ah!—shall dinner come and then, at long and last, in generous vintage melted, shall eyes, shall brain be loosened? Shall my wife grow gross and tippie brandy? Shall my daughters—mere ya-ya things of satin and apothecary’s odours—be very graceful overhead with music, envy, and frivolity? Shall my sons ruin themselves with debauchery? Shall—Pah! why waste more words? As Taenia I can never be. As easy may the hind become a beaver as I a Taenia. What then? O what, my father, what is there for me? O ye accursed three that make this paradise a hell—food, fire, raiment—how shall I find you? The huge machine goes spinning on in air; for every one is there place; for every

one activity but me. Are they happy, father? No one may leave his station for a moment but 'tis filled and occupied : round goes the huge machine before his eyes, leaving him behind, wailing and uncared-for. O dread machine, trampling the sweetness out of us, hast thou no place for me? I know a place that I might fill : but wolves have seized it. Still am I offered room by them, if I but say the lamp is lit, the house inhabited. And why should I not? why should I not? Food, fire, raiment, a station in excelsis, honour would be mine! Could I not minister to my sick brethren—tell them of their far father—make them kind to one another? Might not my foot be on the mountain or by the sea? Could I not wander, easy in myself, secure of place, building up glorious thoughts within me? Mine would it not be, upon the seventh, to blow the clarion over my unhappy brothers who, all the week, live or mislive without the memory of father or of mother? Mine to rebuild the images of our parents and open heaven? But then—the lies—the lies? Ah me! like incubi, would they not brood on me? My foot might be on the mountain or by the sea : but there would be no lightness in it. No glorious thoughts could build themselves amid the black woof of falsehood. Nor in the still recurring, dead, appointed drudgery could my being always flame. I should become even as Simulante. The time was, when in the freshness of the morning, on the springy heath, wandering with me, the foot of Simulante was free, elastic as my own. His voice had a glad spontaneous ring in it; and his sparkling eyes were honest. His heart beat true and warm. His soul was open as the firmament : and being leaped with him in frank exuberance.

'But now the heavy change! See him on the street with motion stiff, mechanical, and face of stereotyped propriety, as if the very air had eyes upon him. The lovely thoughts that erewhile came to him, no more will visit him. Earth has become a blank, the ocean leaden-like and dull. The hills are smoky; and the heavens have lost their blue. His sick brethren—can he speak to them? Does he know to put the gentle finger on the wound? Can he appease the pains, the doubts, the racking agonies? He! he fears infection as a plague—their bedsteads are abomination to

his clothes—he gabbles through the form, and exit. The trumpet 'tis his part to blow upon the seventh, he cannot lift. The seventh! it lies ever before him like a cloud that will not let the sun to shine. 'Tis an incessant bitter in his cup; he has no joy for thoughts of it. O the drudgery, the drudgery! his many windings to evade, elude, escape!

'The solemn emptiness that takes the man from out his face; what a coarse mockery it looks, grown gross with decorous, self-denying gluttony! Seeming himself, what fierce zeal he has for seeming! what hatred and vindictive wrath for all that *is* or *would be*! How, ostrich-like, he thrusts his head into the brake, stamps his fierce feet, and cries, "'Tis so, 'tis so—I say it is, I say it is!'"

'Is it then him that I would follow? Is it beside this man I would sit? Would I make his lot mine? In narrow, fierce intolerance—in the bustling restlessness of self-conferred apostleship—is there a place for me? Or shall mine be the puffed hands folded? Is there aught in me that suits this grave hypocrisy—this clear-starched mockery—this whited wall through which the coarseness of the wine-press and the shambles looms like blasphemy? Would I be Simulante? Never! I will preserve my truth or die! O no! I will not let my blood away! The world shall crash, but I will on! If I cannot live—if I cannot live—why then—I can go home—home to my Father—home to God!'

Ariel bowed his head upon his hands and wept. Then to the cope of heaven he raised his streaming eyes and cried: 'Am I not thine, my Father? am I not thine?'

Coldly stretched the firmament above his head in blank monotony, nor showed one sign of sympathy. He heard a lifeless rivulet purl on. He saw the wide bare heath and the unmeaning sun. Then Ariel stood upon his feet and shrieked into the air: 'Father! Father! am I thy son? . . . Silence, like an upstartled hound, skulked sulkily to its place again. There was the same cold sky—the rivulet—the wide bare heath—and the unmeaning sun. . . . 'And is this all?' he cried, 'and is this all? A dead cold earth heavily to lift my weary feet across! No more! Is there no more? I have been raving all this while! I

have no father—I have no mother! Father? Mother? What Father? what Mother? What words are these? What is father? What is mother? Mother! Father!—I do perplex myself. There is earth, and there are men, and it is hard, hard to live. Mother! Father!—Ariel reeled upon the sward and fell.

Celestial music woke him as of old: ah! he had but dreamed. There was his mother knitting in the sun and all her children round her. Across the fields, and through the wood, and up the hill, and by the sea, rang their glad voices. And ever and anon they came with rich things in their hands to lay them at the feet of Beauty: and she smiled upon them, and took their offerings, and still knit them up into all lovely shapes, colours, and substances. And Ariel, at her feet, lay basking in the sun; and his brothers brought him shells, and eggs of birds, and fins of fish, and scales, and jewels from the mine, and bits of rocks, and flowers, and leaves of trees (for he was their youngest brother), and beautiful were the shapes they took as Ariel placed them

In no Mother's lap was Ariel—the swoon had passed—on the bare heath he lay. Nevertheless, on wings of that fair dream he rose enkindled. 'In my own heart, in my own heart,' he cried, 'there lies the earnest of the future. My mother is not dead, but sleepeth. I will track her footsteps—I will awake her!'

So Ariel anew gathered himself together; and drew his thoughts tight round him; and fixed them in the middle with resolve as with a buckle. Across the moor firmly he bent himself, still muttering as he went: 'Yes, in my own heart—my brothers may deny, for they forget—the sky may know not, nor the earth, for they are passive, dead—but in my own heart—deep in my heart of hearts, it lives—the memory of my mother. At even, or in morning, or at noon, 'tis not in vain they visit me, these dreams and images that inspire and guide. I feel, I know that I shall find her.'

Communing with himself, the youth stepped forward rapidly: the moor was overpassed without his knowing it. But, as his steps grew shorter, and his breath laborious, involuntarily he raised his eyes, and, with a start of pleased

surprise, saw that he was already on the mountain. Nevertheless, halting not, upward, with fresh vigour, on the steeps he threw himself; for eagerly he longed to look abroad if anywhere he might espy aught vestige of his mother—ought tell-tale twinkle from her secret sleeping place.

At length he paused, wearied with exertion. Upon the peak of vantage he had gained, he turned and looked afar upon the ample silentness. 'The wilderness is fair,' he cried, 'surpassing in its loveliness! Blue sky and mighty hills—the woods, the lakes—calm rivers and wide fields—the sea! How beautiful! Ah, here she dwells! Not with my brothers in their sickly-heated rooms of luxury—not with those others in their dark, damp cells of misery—but here!—here with the calm, broad-fronted presences that sun them largely in the slumbrous air!'

Long stood he thus with greedy-gazing eyes; but turned at length and recommenced his journey. Higher, higher as he clomb, still stronger, mightier, grew he in the faith of his great inquest. Did not her very breath mysteriously seem round him? The well-known smile upon her cheek—surely it was the same that now shone fitfully before him!

Suddenly, a voice, musical, of serious ecstatic tone, rising on a swell of simple, yet somewhat stately melody, struck upon his ear, trancing the air. In swift amazement, casting his eyes around, Ariel presently descried, upon a ledge of rock, an old man sitting, rapt. Wondering who he was, and what he did, the youth made towards him. As he came near, something there was about the man that drew the warm soul of the youth up to his lips; and, running hastily to his knees, he cried in passion, 'Tell me, tell me, for thou know'st, where is my mother?' The old man, looking on him, smiled and pointed to a grotto in the rock. Ariel flew to it, and entered. One glance sufficed—it held no living being but himself. The cell was naked and severe of aspect. On a small stone-table lay a book, on which the hermit (who had followed and now passed him) reverently laid his hand. Even as he touched the book, light burst from all its edges; and Ariel exclaimed, 'My mother! what is there, there, of hers?' The old man, lifting the book, went out upon the grassy slope, and Ariel followed. Presently, the hermit

seated himself and motioned Ariel to his side. Then looked he long into the stripling's fair young eyes, till, satisfied, he nodded his head and said, 'Thou art worthy ! to thee the book is open !' With stately, self-complacent pride of aspect, he unclosed the wondrous volume. Strange joy awoke in Ariel as he gazed on these mysterious pages. Token after token of his mother glowed on his enraptured vision. Gems they were and jewels fallen from her hair ; teardrops from her own dear eyes ; smiles from her lips ; glances, naivetés, espiegleries—a thousand charms : all wonderfully preserved and fixed in a pure crystal that yet enhanced their loveliness ! The air pressed on and burned around the book. The world without grew luminous. Ariel looked up : and lo ! across the hill, afar, and down into a hollow, he saw the fringes of her mantle vanishing. Ariel turned eagerly to the old man, who, shutting the book with much complacency, nodded his head, and cried : 'Tis she indeed—'tis she herself—she is asleep no more ! With me, among these hills she dwells ! Follow !' Thus having said, he rose, self-satisfied, put the book beneath his arm, and, stately-stiff, walked to his grotto.

But Ariel saw him not : he was already gone. With speed of light, the mountain-flank was overpassed—the margin of the hollow gained. And from the brink, he peered with eager-rolling eyes into the lurking places of the gulf below. Ah ! no : she was not there ! The very fringes of her robe had vanished utterly. But there was a whispering in the trees—a nodding of the slumbrous foreheads of the opposing rocks, a bubbling of the waters—a wafting of the air—a murmuring of the very ground as after visit of the summer-rain—that spoke her presence. Down the tangled precipice sprang Ariel—down to the level of the slated floor. There stood he : trees and toppling crags hung round, or lay in fragments by him ; and up—up—through midst of them—up, up—far over jutting shelf on shelf, a monstrous waterfall, in the air, blew white and silent. There stood he in that depth of depths and called out 'Mother !' The hollow caves and deep-recesséd angles round about hoarsely woke up with 'Mother !' The jutting crags above, opening their half-awakened eyes, hastily cried 'Mother !' A hush : then

from afar, like a withdrawing wail, afar from the white, silent cataract, came faintly, 'Mother !' Silence, like an aroused, offended, overhanging deity, drew muttering back on Ariel, till he ran. Over the sharp, uneven flints, he ran—round every rock, and into every cave—and leaped the gushing glut, and sped along the slippery shelves, and through the spray into the torrent-tongued nook, and, up the steep, past wall of rock, from ledge to ledge, hither, thither, in open or in close, still calling, 'Mother, Mother,' in his panic, till all the horrid depths, from pool to pinnacle, were wild with hubbub and the cry of 'Mother.'

In vain ! No archly-hiding loveliness sprang forth misgivingly ; nor voice arose, yearning in apprehension and remorse of 'Ariel, Ariel, here am I !' And Ariel's tears fell fast ; and great sobs tore him : 'O where is she, my mother ? O my mother !'

Blank, silent solitude ! The place grew frightful as the place of death. Ghosts of evil deeds threw gloom ; and there were fittings on the dark. In haste, he clomb upon the mountain ; nor stopped, but to the summit mounted. Behind him, hills on hills, interminable, upheaved their great backs to the sleepy air, like whales in shoals. Before him lay the wide-spread champaign, and, afar, the sea. Over the illimitable spaces wistfully gazed Ariel. Longings unutterable arose. What did it all mean then,—this, that lay so glorious around him—beautiful, melancholy, unfathomable—like loveliness in dreamy tears ? Was he alone—alone—unthought of and uncared for—a waif of chance—a stray weed fallen on the rock ?

Wildly he clasped his hands and cried, 'My mother ! O my mother ! art thou but a dream then ?' At that instant her shadow lapsed athwart the plain, and by the sea her very sandals glittered. Adown the steep, precipitate ran Ariel, still whispering to himself 'Tis Beauty !' nor stopped, till, issued on the pebbly beach, he shouted 'Beauty !' The rocks took up the name, and flung athwart the level, 'Beauty.' Silence drew back anon with awful pause ! but Beauty came not. 'Mock me not, mother ! Thou art here, I know : for all around burns with thy presence. O come to me—come forth—I am vexed in heart—'tis Ariel

that calls—thy Ariel—thy youngest born—thy son—thy darling!’

Nor form appeared; nor voice replied. ‘I do deceive myself,’ said Ariel, at length: ‘she is not here. The old man on the mountain assuredly I have mistaken. I will back to him, and question further.’ So he retraced his steps, and once more bent him to the upland.

As he travelled on, he crossed a rivulet—a silver rivulet it was, and prettily it prattled—and there, upon the margin of its pebbled bed, he spied a footstep of his mother. The youth threw himself on his knees to look at it—then raised his eager eyes in quest of others. A second footstep met his sight—another and another—then up the brook, flushed with fresh hope, he ran. Up, up, he followed on, winding as the brook did; nor did his mother’s footsteps in the grass desert him. On, on, he ran, the rivulet ever by his side, even like a playmate. On, on he ran with it under the hollow rock, under the bowery tree, under the thymy bank, and round the island! On, on, o’er grass, o’er sand, o’er pebbles, and o’er lipping ledges—on, on, until the rivulet grew alive to him—a presence! How in rare, sweet places she would stop—and he would stop! And a beaming cheek with glancing eyes and loving mouth would glow upon him! And the twain would pantingly draw close into each other’s breath, like lovers!

On, on, over the open fields—the voice of his companion lost in air! Onward to the wood, where was a gleaming in it. ‘Surely it is she—my mother!’ On through the wood he ran; among the trees he ran, still following on; for there, in very truth, he saw her rushing robes before him! On, on, with eager speed, with glowing cheek and flashing eye—on, on, by fountain and by bank, by copse and wildering dingle—on, on, till bursting from the brake, on the free hill, he reeled. In vain! No queenly form paced there that might beseem his mother.

With wild longing at his heart and wild despair wreathed like two snakes, he threw his eager eyes on all sides. At length, a lambent flame, that liquidly o’erflowed a chasm in the hill, grew plain and plainer to him. The serpent-knot unwreathed itself; with a cry of joy forward he sprang anew.

With swift speed soon he drew near the radiance. He turned a rock; the chasm stood unveiled before him. A quarry of the purest marble—tenanted by the most wondrous forms. Enormous bulks of heroes lay around—vast blocks, the images of bird and beast, of man and mighty god. And, three parts loosened from the solid wall, great, giant forms, like legends of forgotten time, stood forth a-tiptoe. Yea, like a liquid wave, the rigid cliff seemed flowing, yielding up to sight a doubled fist of infancy, a rounded arm, an ankle delicate, shoulders of ample span, and nervy knees. And one old king with haggard eyes and lips convulsed to speech, came forward in the midst, stretching a sceptreless right hand—omnipotence in years. And other forms there were, colossal, bulking from the stone into the lustre that o'erflowed the whole.

What are they?—whence?—amazed stood Ariel, when a low moan near him startled him to look where, on a bunch of green herbs, sat a fair boy with drooping head and idle chisel in his listless hand. Ere Ariel had time to question him, he raised a sudden glance, and cried: 'Deceased majesty I sought to make alive, once more to sway us into peace—but see!'—He pointed to the prostrate mightinesses and sobbed—'But thou—thy mien is gentle and thine eyes are like mine own—what would'st thou? whence com'st thou? what dost thou seek?'

'Fair youth,' said Ariel, 'that doubtless art my brother, our mother hath gone forth and wandered from us, and I, for that contention and confusion rack us, do follow on all paths to find her; and dints of her footing often have I found, but her great presence never.'

'To that end I, too, came forth—at least to bring lost rule among us—but yet of father or of mother heard I never—for me this fallen majesty alone had hope—but art thou sure 'tis not a dream?'

Hereat there rose into the air a wail so sweet that one youth stopped, and both stared breathless. 'Tis sweetness not of earth,' at length gasped Ariel: 'such accents were my mother's—Adieu, fair brother! longer I may not tarry!' Thus speaking, he had sprung forward in the direction of the voice, nor heard (or heeded not if heard) the stranger

cry, 'Come back ! I know the voice ! Come back ! and I will tell——'

Erelong the sudden youth had gained the borders of a lake from which the wail proceeded. The liquid pity of the sound enriched the very air that fell like balm upon the wanderer. Halting, he gazed around. At length, upon the middle of the lake he spied a frail form drooping from a little skiff. A slender youth it was, emaciated and grey, and O ! with such a face of sorrow ! The heart of Ariel was torn within him, as he looked on him. Drawing to the water's edge, he stood and listened while this new vision sang such meaning, melting things of Adler and Haiarno and the rest, and of their misery and sin, that all around grew dewy-luminous, and Ariel, moved to the very core, exclaimed : 'My mother ! Strange youth that hast her voice. My mother ! give me my mother !'

Sudden, at the word, the stranger in the skiff arose as if convulsed, and tore his hair and shrieked : 'We have no mother ! Father or mother had we never ! Spawn of the earth are we, and playthings of the fiend !' Thus shrieking, the form collapsed into the boat, dead ; but from its breast awoke a dove that rose into the air and hovered o'er the lake and flew away, at length, swiftly, yearningly, to the city. And Ariel watched it as it flew ; and saw it stoop upon the city, but in an instant rise again. And as it rose its glossy wings seemed flecked with blood. Natheless it stooped again, but rose again and bloodier than before. And Ariel's own heart bled within him as he saw this gentle loveliness still stoop and rise, and rise and stoop, and find no resting-place, and flag as if exhausted, till a gust took it and bore it away, winging, flickering, into the west.

Ariel was stupified and sank upon the ground. 'What could it all mean?' he thought ! 'Was it all vain, then ? Was his search delusion?' 'Twilight was coming on and doubt clung round him. Over the low mist that crept along the lake, like breath upon a mirror, he looked—over the plain he looked afar to where the mountains dreamily withdrew themselves, till a form arose from them, advancing, gliding towards him. Up, from the mountains and the

plains, the figure grew and gathered, shaping itself. A woman of unutterable loveliness, it seemed, majestic and serene. Unable to contain himself, throbbing with hope, the youth sprang forward. Stopped then the loveliness, and back—and back—withdrew. Panting, he ran, he shrieked. In vain ! the swifter he pursued, the swifter she drew back, till, like the juggle of a shifted glass, she vanished—and the hills were there. Then Ariel retraced his steps, vexed, galled, desperate ; lo ! still backward as he went, again the hills shot suddenly away, melting into each other and the form. Again ran Ariel to meet—again the loveliness withdrew. Then fell a whisper on his ear and thus :

‘In vain, sweet youth, in vain ! The more thou followest, the more shall I withdraw. Beautiful I am of mould, but lifeless. With me is no warm heart to lay thine own upon. I am thy shadow. Dwell not thou with me—Medusa-like, I will transform thee—look !’ Like glare of optic lens, a round of mighty light fell sudden on the mountain, bringing out alone, the old man on his crag, sepulchral. No lock of silver hair—no pebble in the rock—but, in the light, was definite. So changed he was—that aged solitary. Frigid as stone he seemed, narrow and indurated : a very portion of the rock, he seemed, barren and bald and vacant and poor and thin and selfish !

The light withdrew and darkness re-assumed its own. The figure of a man, haggard and dissipated, with power upon his brow and pride upon his lip, pacing hastily to the city, brushed past Ariel, muttering : ‘Pshaw ! there is not even good pistol-practice in a desert !’

Bewildered, tranced in thought, stood Ariel. Hour after hour passed by, but still he moved not. At length, at midnight, when only the stars were out, he turned and bent him to the city.

EPILOGUE.

I SHOULD not hesitate, even now, to reproduce the conclusion of ‘Sleeping Beauty,’ did I but sufficiently remember it. That I do not. And this is a great regret to me, for I acknowledge myself to regard this writing as about my best ; while, as respects thinking again, considerable correction would have followed of what in the

foregoing may only appear product of the heat and haste of youth. In that marvellous preface which Keat—he of the most opulent poetic promise of any man, probably, for the years he died at—wrote in 1818 to the ‘Endymion,’ it is said : ‘The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy ; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted,’ etc. I know not that the imagination of the boy will be generally supposed to have the advantage, even in health, over the imagination of the youth, but I doubt not that the words quoted will be acknowledged admirably to name the latter. To this latter, it may appear, that ‘Sleeping Beauty’ largely owes birth ; and certainly these views of labour, the middle-classes—society in general, have a youthful look. I do not think, however, that their author ever regarded labour as an evil. Not only did he know what labour is, and its necessity, in the abstract, but he had seen much labour, of many kinds, and with perfect perception of its benefits, not only objectively, but subjectively. Far from being a calamity to the subjects themselves, labour as labour is their happiness and health. In very truth, labour alone is life, and to live is the sole earthly enjoyment. Let any man watch the workman, and he will find that labour is not even *hard*. The *Navvie* does as much work as any man, but with what unresting ease, the breath not an inspiration quickened, nor the pulse one throb ! Carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, shop-keepers, even mill-workers, colliers, miners, can joke and laugh : their work is but their happiest way of spending the day, and they know it. What concerns the middle-classes, again, is a more ambiguous matter, and the general question itself is a more complicated one. There is no doubt that the young man was caught by the idea that the working-class alone produced the wealth, while the middle-class, without adding to this wealth, only cunningly contrived, through their education, to get the handling of it. Doubtless, there are abuses : doubtless there is quite a host of non-producers now-a-days—men, really, and in every way, idlers—who live, and live in prodigality, by simply taking, so to speak, *rides* on the property of others. Still, it is beyond a doubt that, *under a good government*, the stewardship of the nation can by no better means be achieved, than by a *mean*—a middle-class of capitalists who have what they have, in ultimate instances only through their own industry. Even suppose government to be made the sole capitalist, it never could come directly face to face with labour ; it would still be necessarily separated from it by a whole middle-class of functionaries. Then, too, the system would be artificial, and temptations to abuse irresistible. At present, however often the word conventional may be used, and not irrelevantly, in this connection, society is not really artificial ; it is a growth, and, with all its shortcomings, the best growth possible. The sight of unworthy wealth is bitter, while that of vicious poverty stirs sorrow to the core ; but these must be. Externality not more certainly necessitates inequalities physically, than inequalities metaphysically. The consolation is that while penalty is the law for both conditions, there is a door of escape even from

the latter. There are in this world hard, hard lots, beset often with difficulties and obstructions, all but insurmountable, still it is true, that no man need remain poor. The Modern State is the *natural* organization of men—of men on labour. As woven of the universal, the particular, and the singular, it is a life. There wants but full consciousness of these constituents to bring all speedily into a very tolerable perfection. But, at all events, as regards what is specially in question, wherever, using the terms of Aristotle, there is the *Χειροτέχνη*, there must also be the *ἀρχιτέκτων*, and that is, even in the Aristotelian sense of the word, a middle-class of leaders, directors, managers, guides. It is quite certain, however, that that fellow Volp is the great evil of society at present. The plausible fellow intercepts all the wages, and even the credit, of the actual workman. It is pretty much the fault of the people: the people *will* turn away from the commonplace reality in its knee-bagged trousers to take the imposing fiction in its robes. They should really give themselves a little trouble to find the man *der kennt und kann und will*. Besides Volp, there occur in this essay a few other passable character-generalisations, perhaps.

It is not to be understood, either, that, though Simulante be only an imposter, there was ever any thought of undervaluing the genuine Sacrante. The true, ultimate, supreme cement of society, to take it only so, and not in its specially sacred bearing on the individual, was always known and fervently appreciated. Let us say but this here. How can you be secure of your oaths in a court of law, if you have not religion to breathe into them life, validity, necessity? Let it be a light thing to swear falsely to serve oneself, though with injury to others, and how long will society subsist? When the fire died out in Greece, the Particular woke up for itself, and gnawed the universe into dust. When religion failed, that is, to enforce the sanctity of an oath, the Sycophants were let loose to serve themselves by swearing away the life, and property, and validity of all that was as yet sound.

Let Simulante be treated as he may, then, it is quite certain that Sacrante (who also, as we see, might be named Integrante) was perfectly understood and honoured—nay, that he lay in the original plan as the main agent in the discovery and restoration of Beauty, who was solemnly to be conducted back to her re-built home.

Of the conclusion of the piece nothing remains but the following passage from a monologue of Ariel:—

Far and wide the bosom of the earth is wounded, and her own blood disfigures it. The bowels of the earth dragged forth, hide her green flanks with blue deformity; while cumbersome around, mid smoking sulphur and distasteful ash, lie rocks in blocks, with bulks of metal and unseemly log. In vain, in vain the quest of Beauty here! Nor with my brethren that do weave their motion, as into a web, with these dead things, is any memory of our mother left,—O weariness! To weave my motion even as theirs,—shut my far eyes, and fold my world-attaining wings,—be clothed, be filled,—in void hours, for diversion, read forged legends of the parents we forget,—

and so wax old, incapable, and die! Most mighty consummation! Can it be? Is there no more? For nought but this, these huge appliances—laborious upgrowth from the womb of time of multi-form relations numberless, that mock with purpose, but are purposeless;—countless, never-ending *kything* from the lap of Nought, of entities prodigious, that do come and go, affecting, unaffected;—stupendous up-lift of over-globing vast, with jewelled nights, and days fleece-draped, with purple linings, crimson fringe, and golden tassels from the sun himself, in look of whom the planets live, or die not having;—green earths silvered by moons that feed the fairies, trailing rich mantles by the rills, where lilies swoon and trees stoop over;—mountains, and seas, and meadows, with churm of myriad existences;—rooms fire-scarletted to comfort, with ring of childhood's laugh, and wave of woman,—and all the strange without of airy spire and smoking pinnacle, mansions in shade, lit windows, teeming streets? Inexplicable whole,—a joy, a sorrow, and an awe—that ends in nothing! Ah me! I know;—I know not! See! with wings invisible my brothers blind have over-run the earth, and seized it to them. They forge an adamantine hand to grasp it, and in their clutch it crumples, yielding its virtue up. Yea, mountain, and sea, and arid steppè of the east, contract to bounds, and lie upon their palm—yet still for evil! Darkness, and blindness, and confusion, wanton the more; and life is misery. Small creatures coralline, when untold millions of their race had died in elder æons, did, from the abyss of ocean, piling their own corpses up, extrude this island. Such creatures, then, are we, that lift a dead rock to the lipping sea, and cease? And now some mightier dynasty is on the dawn—now that the earth is fictile—some mightier dynasty, heedless of us, or ignorant of us, to carry up, not man, but man's poor workings higher, leaving him behind, unpulchred in thought, himself unthinking.

THE UNIVERSAL STRIKE.*

O MUSE! I too would sing. I, all untried,
Am passionate to don the golden woof,
And cleave Empyrean with a penn of pride.
Ah, let me! Be thou strong in my behoof!
Great are the souls that dare. To front the proof,
Is glorious: and I, if but one spark
Of intellect I strike, fear not the hoof
Of malice. Let the crow croak! Hangs my mark
High: and I would trample only death and the dark.

* Planned, and the first eight Spenserian stanzas written in 1845.

Which of the Nine—which star of all the Nine
Pierides beacons adventurous me?
Shall Clio's plectron smite a mighty line?
The lyre of rich-enrobed Melpomene,
Or flute of flowered Euterpe shall it be,
That guides? Neither. The trumpet I would blow
That Spenser blew, and, mighty, marched as he,
Who in resounding panoply did glow,
The god, Phoebus Apollo with his silver bow.

Big words, big words! All vanity! The weight,
Why lift of work? O life! O weariness!
Far better were it not, innocuate,
To dream, and dream, and dream, in idleness—
Dream after dream in large reposédness?
The air is heavy and my limbs are weak;
I cannot lift them—cannot bear the stress
Of movement. Stale the best and flat: why seek
Jargon's illimitable nothingness to eke?

Where is the worth of this great thing, a bard?
What use on earth the tuneful calling bland?
One line—one word, is oftentimes more hard
To turn, than is the glebe beneath the hand
Of labour. See! yon clown upon the land,
Hath cut the crop, gathered and bundled it,
An ample store sufficient to withstand
The teeth of many living men; and yet,
In the same time, these are the verses I have writ.

The mountains travail that a mouse be born:
And what have I to do with such vain toil?
Where is the virtue of this twisted horn
Of verbiage? What good to droil and moil,
Laborious, in poor word-catching coil
Of authorship? I will throw up the task;
And, haply, disentangled from the broil,
Sit on an eminence, nor will I ask
Power to myself, but in the light of others bask.

And here to lull us, the naive old man
With bud of prime upon his *caller* cheek,
And on his lip, the sign Saturnian,
And big-mouthed thunder of the olden Greek—
Homer ! full bard ! full man !—yet in the freak
Of Juno he believes ; nor thinks the fry
Of stupid stories of that paltry pique
That split Olympus, and perplexed the sky,
And glutted hell, and dogs, and all the birds, a lie.

Yet him we'll hear ! first lark that took the air,
And piped to morning over leaguered Troy ?
Yes him, the first that did of Delphi dare
To breathe the inspiration and the joy,
Blind Melesigenes ! simple as a boy
In unaffected manhood—Pah ! no more !
No more ! I'm sick of this eternal *oi*.
Achilles is a braggart and a bore,
Ulysses too, and Diomedes good to roar.

Prithee the use of this ! What good, I ask,
Poor Homer's pains to measure short and long ?
Bethink you, sirs ! what merit in the task
Of vexing words, to extricate ding-dong
From perverse combinations, haply wrong
Even at the best ? Time were but wasted by it.
Fine Greek ? Fine platitude, I think—sing-song—
Fine childishness, these tales of babes unquiet,
Bragging, and throwing stones, and eating equal diet.

There's dancing prattle of Anacreon,
Leering with roses on his old head, and
Red wine-stain on his lip : a skeleton
Grins livelier. As little can I stand
Who wrote the ' Clouds,' though quite a master-hand
He's named ; but silly, boyish, and jejune,
And coarse, and common, at least *that* is planned.
And Tragedy is worse : it were a boon
These Choruses were sunk in mid-sea, late or soon.

*They're good for History ; but if Greece fail,
Try Rome.* Catullus has a grace, and prig
Virgil, no doubt, it is, gives Milton scale
Of his best pauses, breaks, and rhythm big ;
Then Horace, dirty, laughing, little pig,
(His *Iter* see), a pretty quill has got.
Yet, neither he nor Virgil's worth a fig
In truth,—wood, after all, their verse ; their thought
Idle, or else just from some Greek or other caught.

Come home, then,—Shakespeare take ! O yes, were we
The ruffling bluster of the surf once through,
Out to the clear depths of his proper sea,
'Twere well ; ay, and the best ; but that irks so !
Milton, for images, for mighty blow
And peal of organ, feet innumerable
Of verse, is undisputed master now :
But then—the angels in their *company-drill*,
And Son fired at with cannon by the devils in hell !

Weak, miserable caricature all that !
So, rather let me sit me by the fire,
With English Chaucer and with Burns the Scot ;
Compared with whom, thin even is Molière,
Voltaire wants depth, and Dante's simple lyre
Simply chants nightmare, slow and battle-like,—
But no ! it seems I must myself aspire
Gravely to sing or say—no tale antike—
The END DEFINITIVE, the *Universal Strike*.

Broods an horizon low, green, brown, morose,
Over the sullen ice, moveless in block,
Upon the snow, chill, miserable, congealed,
But semi-dormant, dull, a thing that starves.
Motionless by a rift, a bear, head down :
Motionless over against, an Eskimo,
His pointed hut slow-heeling over edge
Of the dim universe, asleep in dream.
Far on the hill, by a felled tree, there sits
The wood-cutter, his hatchet in his lap,

Idle. Upon the water by the bank,
The raft at its moorings will not even sway.
The stream itself, as though with eyes abashed,
Just slinks by the shut doors and windows blank
Of smokeless cottages, nor lifts a gleam.
Immovable upon the field the steers :
A moveless ploughman with a moveless plough.
Within the city, silent, dead, the Trades
Sit idle with their implements in hand,—
Shuttle or hammer, saw, or knife, or plane.
Over a hoof between his knees, the smith
Stoops, still, the steed not moving by the wall.
The butcher stands, his knife upon the whet.
The grocer stirs not by a scale dropped plumb,
The while one customer has turned to leave,
A parcel in her hand. The draper stays
His wand upon the cloth. That thief himself
Has stopped, the lock awry upon the door.
A postman by a bell, with housemaid, who
Stretches for a brown letter, thimble-sealed,
Speaks not, but stares—each at the other—blank.
The helmeted policeman, on the street,
Stands still, his hands within his belt. How still
Are all the patients in the hospital—
The doctor by that bedside seems asleep,
His fingers on the pulse ! The lawyer sleeps,
The pen within his thumb. The baker sleeps,
There, by his batch that smokes not, and his man
Sleeps, towelling over the pail his foot.
That file of soldiers, with their shouldered arms,
And the capped man in front of them, who holds
A cane, are toys—toys that a child has set.
The life-guard and his horse seem stone. No crank
Awakes, or anvil starts, or levers roll,
And motionless is every whirling wheel
In factories, whose very air has lost
Its dust, spectral with dead machinery.
The jeweller in his booth, with head on hand,
Sits underneath his glittering trinketry
In the glazed window,—ouches, brooches, chains,

Beryl and bezel, clasp and carkanet.
The blower stands, the bottle in his hand,
His cheeks still full. The beggar by the door,
Knocks not. The master at the work-house gate,
Offers a loaf the pauper will not take.
The priest, with incense in his hand, has stopped,
Sudden, by the altar, as though he asked
What am I, then?—what is it that I do?
Within the silent palace sits the king
With idle sceptre, moveless, on his throne,
Amid his white-locked, gownéd senators,
Whose lidded looks are all upon the ground.
No sound, no movement anywhere in all
The ghastly thoroughfares and naked roofs.
Nought but a stirless shine across the plain,
O'er villages, and fields, and up the hills.
Afar upon the sea, against the sky,
The rigging of a ship, and, at its side,
A smokeless steamer, idle as a cork.
The sun glares in his place, and the white moon
Stares back upon him, dull. The universe
Folds into itself, sinking to the blank
And all-devouring maw of nothingness.
—'Tis gone : no world, no space, no time, no God!
Nothing ! A null eternity that knows
Nor pause, nor continuity—a blank !
Blank all ! A blank of blanks,—blank, blank, blank, blank!

No ! turns on its Æolian hinge the gate !
Bursts forth into the blank the universe !
The winds are joyous round the mountain tops ;
The laughing sun plays with them ; and the mill
Loud-switches in the seething pool, the while
The miller at his door lends a quick hand
To load the busy cart. His children shout !
We live. Life, while we live, is glad and gay,
And sweet. Die when we may, most surely soon
Will come the consummation : we shall see
At last THE END within the hand of God.

A PEEP INTO A WELSH IRON VALLEY.*

SUCH a peep must be a novelty to many of our readers ; and as Wales—from the exertions of a Welsh Educational League, from certain motions in Parliament, and from the appointment of a Special Commission of Inquiry—has become a subject of some considerable agitation of late, we trust that our present attempt will prove neither unseasonable nor unwelcome. To him, indeed, whose eyes and ears are constantly dazzled and dinned by the ceaseless sights and sounds of city-thoroughfares, a glance, as from the top of St. Paul's, into the little busy nest of one of these remote Welsh Iron Valleys, may come not unpleasantly. Merthyr is by far the most important of them all ; but for the present, we shall direct our eyes to a smaller and a prettier.

There, then, it lies beneath our feet ! We can see into the very streets and house-row spaces that straggle through the bottom of it : some portion of a true picture of Wales, and life in Wales, surely we shall attain to. There it lies, in the splendour of an autumnal sun. How beautifully small it is ! How miniature-like, somehow ! A gently-curving sweep it is between these two low mountain ridges, which, leaving the skirts of the high, bleak common on the verge of which we stand, approach to form it. The roots of the two ridges seem to digitate into each other, down there, at the far end ; but their tops remain apart, giving sight to a remote mountain with the white dot of a cottage far away, and no other object visible. For there is a crystal clearness in the air to-day, that makes the distant present ; bringing localities, usually considered out and beyond our own, somehow, for the nonce, into the very midst of us,—associating the whole family of hills around into one peaceful brotherhood of neighbours.

Beautiful, beneath our feet, lies now our miniature valley, all golden in the sun of autumn. Patches of dark-foliaged trees, irregularly embossing the mountain-sides, contrast delightfully with the lighter, fresher green that flows between and around them. From the straggling street, that zig-zags,

* From *Douglas Jerrold's Magazine* for October 1847.

interruptedly, through the bottom of the valley, there are cottages in clusters, raying out on all sides : white cottages in clusters, up and up the slopes on either side, dwindling in number, till, here and there, beneath the summit, they are seen solitary. How delightfully they seem to doze, these high solitary ones, on the flanks of the mountain, gleaming over trees, or shining above the fence-divided fields, which now are so peculiar—some freshly-green, from which the later hay has just been swept—some waving with yellow corn—some cut up into, and picturesquely dotted with, the bundled sheaves.

See there, far down, backed by the digitated roots of the tree-embossed mountain, far over these fresh fields, a stack shoots up ! There is white steam at the base of it, curling up the tall, clean column. Beautiful ! Beautiful are the trees, and the fields, and the mountain flanks ; but in that whole lovely landscape is there one object more strikingly beautiful than the tall, symmetrical stalk, shooting up from the trees, with the snowy steam at the base of it ? There is a most peculiar charm in it. It looks healthy, somehow—cheerful. It wears nothing of the sulky gloom its brethren of the city wear. It shoots up so peacefully happy-like, with the fleecy steam beneath, curling up the side of it—all contrasting so pleasingly with the blue sky, and the trees, and the fields, and the hills around.

Nearer us (just by us, indeed—we can just faintly hear the breathing of the blast) are the dingy well-smoked towers of the blast-furnaces. Grim, and black, and ancient-looking, standing in a range ; by day almost deserted-like—their caps of flame all doffed in presence of the sun ; and, save the filler wheeling his barrow to the top, hardly an individual to be seen.

Farther down, is the many-chimneyed forge ; the gleam of the molten metal fitfully conquers the golden splendour of the season. You can see the rapid roll of machinery there, and the busy movements of many men.

There, again, are the dirty, black, smouldering coke-yards—their lights all killed, like the stars, by the sun. Strange shapes of women, are they not, these that move about amongst the smoke and dust ? These are the coke girls,

wearing black straw-bonnets, with coarse pinafores, that, girded in the middle, cover them from the throat to about a foot above their clogs. There they are, eyes, lips, nose, every inch of them, except their red gums and pearly teeth, saturated with coal-dust—there they are, in storm and shine, raking among these clouds of sulphury smoke and stifling soot, at five or six shillings a-week ! They are laughing and chatting (not to say swearing) vigorously, however. Nay, see there ! the governor must be out of sight : a party of them have just succeeded in pushing one of their unlucky coadjutors of the male species into the water-course. What unmistakeable gesticulations of laughter and intensest mirth ! Among men, they do the work of men ; their strength is that of men ; their language that of men ; their actions those of men—a nice nursery for the wives and mothers of Welsh workmen the coke-yard must be.

Looking now to the expanded mountain flanks, what are these that seem mole-hills from Brobdingnag ? These are the *tips*. *Levels* are driven, in many places, into the mountain, and these are the rubbish mounds at the mouths of them, swelling, almost, into new hills themselves, and increasing, from day to day, as the laden trams, or tram-carriages, are tipped over them. See, on the top of one of them, are metal tram-plates, gleaming in the sun ! On the tram-road (a sort of railroad) formed by them, a horse drags a laden tram along. He is stopped—unyoked. The tram is pushed forward to the very verge of the tip. There are two girls, in every respect like their sisters of the coke-yard, busy undoing the fastenings. The tram is tipped up till its cargo of shale-rubbish falls off, down the shelving sides of the mound.

Tip after tip ! Why, the whole hill is dotted with them. What monsters some of them are ! How they differ in colour !—grey, and blue, and reddish ! Some of them are evidently the refuse of the furnace or the forge. Some of them seem smouldering and sulphury. Some of them look deserted : the coarser grasses grow thinly around their bases ; and lazy cattle, here and there, chewing the cud, stare stupidly from their tops, dead to the glory of the scene, but dreaming, somehow, in an un-idea'd way, of their secu-

rity from the swords and spears of the gads. What wear and tear of muscle—what waste of human breath and sweat it must have taken to dig the shale which forms these rubbish-tips ! And not shale alone—that is but the refuse. Where are the innumerable tons of coal or iron-ore that came along with it ? What life, then, must there not be, at this moment, within these mountains !

Yonder is a balance-pit. Instead of a level, driven more or less horizontally into the hill, to meet the mineral, a pit has there been sunk upon it. There it stands, with its protecting roof over it, at the middle of its rubbish-tip, surrounded by its orderly ranges of mine (or iron-ore). The little pool of water that feeds it lies there, on the side of the hill ; and there is the little watercourse that connects the two. See ! through the open side of the pit-covering, a tram has reached the top ; it is run off ; it contains shale ; and is dragged forward to be tipped. An empty tram is run on in its place. See, a wire is drawn ; a gush of water falls from the roof into the tram. It fills—it sinks. A tram of mine rises at the other side. What troops of girls are there, dressed like those of the coke-yard, but, like the men and horses around, all of an ochrey or brick-dust aspect ! Their task is to sort the mine—to pile it up into orderly heaps of certain dimensions.

See, along that tram-road, are teams of five or six horses dragging trams laden with lime for the blast-furnaces ! Yonder is a canal with boats on it. And hark ! the whistle of a locomotive ! See, it comes hiss-hiss-hissing up a railway ! Here too then has the Wordsworth-hated engine penetrated. True poet ! rigid, high, but thin and narrow man ! even amidst these discordant screams and hisses, canst thou not hear Milton's 'Cathedral Music ?' Canst thou not see the Catholic front of Shakespeare there ? Canst thou not see thyself there ? Ugly monster as it is to thee, banishing all poetry and beauty, it brings Shakespeare and Milton and Wordsworth to lift their poor Welsh brethren nearer heaven. All earthly as these flames and smoke and steam may seem to thee, yet, in the midst of them, even wings of angels turn up ever and anon radiantly !

There, then, is the whole valley lustrous in the sun. You

see it all at a glance : the gentle, alternate slopes—the embossing foliage—the fresh fields—the cottages, single or in clusters—the stacks and engine-houses—the furnaces—the forges—the black coke-yards—the balance-pits and pools—the red mine banks—the tips and the lazy cattle—the straggling street ! How beautiful it is ! How peacefully distinct in the clear sunshine ! How the crystal air cuts out everything like a gem ! All seems indeed gem-like—miniature-like, with filmy iridescent fringes somehow here and there, as if it were through a reversed opera-glass we saw it all !

Such, then, is the physical aspect of our valley ; let us now discover what forms life assumes in it.

Looking along the turnpike road beneath our feet, and through the village, what objects do we see ? There are horses in droves carrying wood. There are black little girls, urging on demurest donkeys. Their panniers are laden with coal till the fetlocks of the poor creatures seem, at every step, sinking to the ground. How vivaciously the coal-black, white-teethed little women (of from nine to twelve) ply their work. They are adepts at the whip. Their ‘Chick,’ ‘Chick,’ ‘Come up, Boxer,’ ‘Come up, Sharper,’ are most fascinating to hear. Horses and donkeys, by the bye, are all worked in English, even by those who do not understand a word of it. There are wives and daughters carrying victuals to their husbands and fathers. There is a circle of women round a well. What an opportunity for gossip—not neglected ! The pitcher of one of them is just filled. A large-sized vessel it is, something like a Roman Amphora. A coil of cloth, extemporaneously twisted out of an apron, or a towel, or something similar, being put upon her crown, a neighbour assists her to lift the jar thereon, and off she straddles cautiously, like Rebecca from the fountain. Is it the weight of the water, or the quality of it, or what is it, that produces that unsightly wen on the neck of one so fresh and rosy ?

Yonder are the members of a benefit-club marching in full procession. The men are first, with tidy clothes and white gloves. They have sashes, banners, emblems, staves, and rods of office. The women follow them. How well and cleanly clad they are ! Substantial gowns, large, comfort-

able shawls ; the sugar-loaf hat, with broad brim, fastened coquettishly a little on one side, and snowy muslin bordering their rosy faces. Reader ! You shall travel many a mile of Her Majesty's dominions, yet fail to meet any such band of jolly, rosy damsels. We mean the unmarried ones ; for they have employment out of doors ; they are guiltless of stays ; their cheeks are clear ; their forms are full and healthy. The married ones, for the most part, however, have no such look. Shut up in their close cottages, debarred of air and exercise, worried by drunken husbands, their forms are no longer full and firm ; the clear fresh health forsakes their cheeks ; with everlasting tea and bacon, perhaps with tobacco and strong liquors, dyspepsia soon sets in with all the horrors of flatulence and hypochondriacism.

Yonder is a funeral. In the midst of a seeming rabble of men and women, old and young, on horseback or on foot, in clothes of all colours, without order or arrangement, the corpse is carried. This has been some workman merely. Had it been any one of note, we should have had the clergyman and the doctor in the van, on horseback probably, followed at seemly distance by the undertaker and the furnisher of mournings, all four with black gloves, and several yards of broad black silk about their hats and dangling down their backs. The silk and the gloves, by the bye, are gifts from the relatives of the deceased : the silk becomes profitable, we are free to say, in the shape of aprons to wife, daughter, or other female favourite. The reader shall make his own reflections on this selection of four such functionaries to lead the column to the grave. The clergyman, the undertaker, the furnisher of mournings can be understood, but the doctor—we *will* leave it—it is a sheer piece of practical wagery. But our workman's funeral—hark ! as they go a Welsh psalm is raised. How solemnly it rises ! The motley rabble has assumed a new look. How the melody has fused and glassed it ! It looks holy now—sacred. Ah ! but the church is far, the day is fine, the way is pleasant ; the fewest will return in soberness. To many a man and woman there, this funeral is but a 'spree.'

Yonder appears to be a wedding party. Two couples, in Sunday apparel, walk arm-in-arm, following each other

Doubtless, they have been spliced by the Parish-Registrar, who bids fair to do the Vicar out of all his marriage fees. By way of wedding-jaunt, they are now in process of making a tour of the principal public-houses. The admonitions they receive from their friends in each, however instructive and encouraging, are more remarkable for straightforwardness, than for elegance, or even decency, of speech. The bridegroom seems already, by sundry symptoms, to acknowledge the virtue of the various taps he has achieved.

The doctor, on horseback, in sportsman's jacket, with some dogs behind him ; a farmer or two, on business ; a Scotch teaman poking his brassy face from house to house ; men hawking Titanic stockings bundled across a stick ; children at play ; one or two red miners or black colliers staggering by some public-house ; women carrying water-jars on their head : such are the objects to be seen in a Welsh village. Of these, the women are the most striking and peculiar : the affection they display for the cast-off articles of their husbands' wardrobes is to a stranger quite touching. The hat seems to be generally set aside as economical wear for a man's grandmother. As for his wife, you shall meet her in his waistcoat ; you shall meet her in his shoes ; you shall meet her in his coat, with her hands jauntily stuck in the pockets, and looking, the reader may be assured, infinitely amusing. The only marital garment that seems unworn by them out of doors, is the small-clothes : a vesture so sacred is only for the hearth.

But let us look nearer at the village. Let us peep a little into that double row of houses just beneath us. What huts these houses are ! How irregularly built. Doors that enforce the decorum of a salaam, not without record of the lesson remaining on the hat of him who is rude enough to enter covered. Windows a foot or so square ; one-half of many of them not glazed, but wooden. Small sleeping-rooms, small eating-rooms, we guess, are these. The row seems populous too. What miserable little bits of garden ground. What wretched fences, irregular, tumble-down compromises of stick and stone. What indescribable little erections all about, indeed, of stick or stone, for purposes the most varied. What old barrels lying down to hold dog or hog. What old

barrels standing up to hold coals, or the brock of swine. What cow-houses, donkey-houses, horse-houses, dog, duck, and hen-houses. What porkers, with their farrow, grunting about. What asses standing motionless, statuesque. What busy children. What fun that wicked one is having, who has thrown himself sack-wise across that astonished porker, and is thus being half-dragged, half-carried. A larger party are busy tormenting a poor donkey. What fun they have—boys, and girls, and pigs, ducks, donkeys, and dogs. How the women bustle! carrying water, firing ovens, running about with huge loaves, bringing from the shop great loads of flour upon their heads, liming the outside of their houses, washing at tubs, spreading clothes upon their bits of hedges, picking up squalling infants who have tumbled in the gutter, rescuing bloody-nosed urchins from skirmishes—Nay, there are two skirmishing themselves! What gesticulation! What words! Words! The very men, who are by chance about, slink into their houses in the purest shame.

We have been struck, by the bye, for the last half-hour, though we have not mentioned it (but we suppose we must), with the continual appearance of a certain utensil. Like Goldsmith's stocking, which was 'a cap by night, a stocking all the day,' it also has a double function—one of the night, the other of the day. Reader! its use by night you already know and respect. Its use by day, or rather uses, for they are legion, will astonish you, should you come to Wales; but mind, you must not laugh. Let it be brandished and flourished before your eyes, in a thousand quarters, to a thousand purposes, respect it still! Let the damsel bring it thee decorously with hand-towel and with soap to wash therein, with gravity accept, and thankfully.

And this, then, is a Welsh iron-valley. Behind us, in that mountain, are quarries, clinking with the hammers of those that hew the lime to flux the ore. In the bowels of the earth, beneath our feet, are men, half-naked, cutting, by the light of candles, from the walls of narrow chambers, coal, to form the coke which melts it. But perhaps, they are idling now. Assembled in some common passage, illuminated by the combination of their candles, they sit them on the ground, smoking their pipes, drinking their small-beer;

while water all around drips from the roof; explosive gas murmurs through bubbles on the walls, or, here and there, in a considerable stream, blows loudly through 'a blower;' the dark mineral glitters on the lading tram; and terriers, seated by their masters' victuals, bay the rats from them.

Miners, too, beneath our feet, with pickaxe, or with blasting-powder, loosen from the earth the ore. Horses, through long passages, drag in darkness the minerals to the light. Boys of eight or nine, or younger, spend the day by doors that guide the current of the air, which is the life of all within. By locomotive along railway, or by horse on tram-road, these materials of lime, and coal, and ore, are brought to the furnaces. Stout wenches, with huge hammers, break suitably the lime and mine. Others assist the coking of the coal. The filler wheels his barrow of mine, or lime, or coke, into the crackling flame of the blast-furnace. At the bottom of the furnace, the moulder lays his moulds. The furnace is tapped; the molten brilliance flows forth in a solid stream, filling up, one after one so takingly, its appointed channels.

Lank figures of firemen, there, in the forge, reheat the metal. Their thin, swarthy, sweat-dripping faces gleam in the light of the open oven, as, ever and anon, with long rods, they poke the melting mass. How the white-hot metal flashes hither and thither all about the forge! How it spurts and sparkles beneath the squeezer! How beautifully, red-hot, it is gradually rolled into long bars by the wheels of the rolling mill! Along canal, tramway, or railway, the finished metal is now carried to the port, whence it is shipped, to civilize the world.

And these workmen have all cottages, and wives, and families. And there are agents, and master-men, and gaffers, to rule and guide them. And there are shopkeepers to feed and clothe them. And there are lawyers, and surgeons, and druggists, to minister, each of his craft, to them. And, there, in London, is the flower, the blossom of the whole, the Iron King himself, whose task it is to find a proper outlet for the labour of the valley. Sorry are we that, among all these functionaries, the school-

master may not be named ; but the way is clearing for him, and there is work for him.

Such are the elements of Welsh society ; few, simple, most easy of dissection, were it our present task to do so.

But, as we look and meditate, evening comes. There is a peculiar glory all around. The radiance in the grass is yet a clearer gold ; and stand out still more gem-like every tree, stone, and cottage in the valley. The sun shines as between bars of a long rail of splendour-overflowed clouds. The milkmaid is on the golden common, with her pail. That pit-mouth bristles suddenly with men that seem springing from the soil. Groups of colliers come from the hill ; tobacco-smoke stains the pure air around them. Bands of men and bands of women, in parallel roads homewards, exchange, in boisterous mirth, the rudest jokes. Down house-rows children run to meet their fathers. Already, the lover, on the stile, sits by his mistress ; full many a sweet word has his native tongue to woo-withal. Women are carrying water in yet a greater bustle. From mouths of levels, bestridden by coal-black, white-teethed little urchins, issue the willing work-horses. With their broad, clayey blinders, straps, girths, and other tackle, they look like skeletons—fossil skeletons—newly dug. How they snuff their way, well pleased, homewards ! Into what clumsy races their tyrannous little masters drive them ! There ! they have reached a river-bed : how they enjoy the freshness ! With what delight they flounce and plash about, and butt the water with their nostrils !

Through open doors now gleams many a naked figure ; fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, in grave ablution before the faces of their unconcerned daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. But small accommodation for the toilet have even the girls, we guess.

On bridges, and by blank walls of houses, gather now young and old to idle, smoking their pipes ; blithe in their relief from toil ; fresh in their clean clothes and well-washed skins. The more fatigued, and these are not a few, have gone at once to bed. From rare cottages the evening hymn arises. The taps are filling. Dance and the harp are heard : shouts of revelry and mirth. Hark, too,

there are execrations, imprecations, curses, and sounds of tumult, where some intoxicated wretch fights with his brother.

Night falls deeper upon them and us. The furnaces blaze up, and make the sky a flame. The heart of all the valley, which is the blast-engine, beats now audibly in the hush of night. The mountains indistinctly loom. The stars are out. And once more, the *what-does-it-mean!*—the mystery of all—the awe of all—falls on the heart of the penman.

THE BLACKSMITH'S HAME.

O BONNIE and sweet is my ain wife at hame,
Whatever comes owre us, she's ever the same ;
And hard do I hammer this red bar o' airn
At the thochts o' my hame, my wife, and my bairn.

O fu' licht is my heart, and loupin' wi' glee,
As darker and darker the smiddy I see,
And brichter and brichter, at every new heat,
The airn on the studdy so stoutly I beat.

When 'sax o'clock,' 'sax o'clock's' ilka bell's sang,
Flung down is my hammer wi' loud-ringing bang ;
My shirt sleeves unbuckled, and, no to tak' lang,
My coat I tear doon and put on as I gang.

Fu' soon I'm at hame ; no to file her sweet face,
I wash mysel' clean. and put on ither claes,
Then I yield to the love my bosom maks warm,
I kiss Mary's lips and the bairn's on her arm.

How pleasant is a' at my ain humble hame ;
My wife's glossy black hair's bun' trig wi' its kame ;
Her gown, tho' but coorse, is as neat as is seen ;
Clean soopit's the flure, and the her'stane fu' clean.

The jams on the inside are as white as can be,
 But they're black on the outside, and sparklin' to see ;
 The parritch are toomed at the ingle sae bricht—
 Neither het nor owre cauld, but just unco richt.

The nicht flichters by ere we think it begun,
 In daffin', and kissin', and dandlin' our son.
 But whiles Mary sews, and some good book I read—
 My bairn in my bosie lays doon its wee head.

O bonnie and sweet is my ain wife at hame,
 Whatever comes owre us, she's ever the same.
 Ye drinkers, in whisky nae langer you'd tine
 Your hard-gotten gains, were your Maries like mine.*

ON WORDSWORTH'S GREAT SONNET.

MANY, with eye dilate, from some such perch,
 In similar observances, have seen
 The huge wide city in its morning sheen ;
 And, though they felt the longing and the search
 For apt expression, not could call it *bare*,

* In a notice of 'English Songs and Ballads by Alexander Hume,' that appears in *Tait's Magazine* for March 1838, the editor takes courage to print the above 'very rude effusion.' It 'has been for some time lying upon our table,' he continues, but 'we could scarcely have ventured it forth alone.' Then there follow a goodly number of very amusing remarks on the 'Glaswegian sturdy smiter upon the anvil,' who looms big and clumsy before the editorial imagination, instead of the stripling student who had assumed the character. So stowed away in the middle of the critical review of another, its presence in *Tait's Magazine* escaped notice till October 1841, when the fact was discovered and pointed out by a friend. Tait, however, was found to have unaccountably made the 'very rude effusion' so very much ruder, that it was judged proper to send it with an explanatory letter to the editor of the *Glasgow Courier*. Both letter and song may be read in the issue of that broadsheet for the 14th October 1841. The application, whether to the one editor or the other, was a pseudonymous one.

Open unto the fields and to the sky.
 The domes that were asleep in smokeless air,
 The mighty heart, the river gliding by,
 Were felt, not also felt the power to name ;
 Bewildered intellect, struggling, could frame
 No utterance. But he, the mighty one,
 Had but to see to pour his words divine ;
 His eye, keen-flashing, instant, seized upon
 The mystery,—gave character and sign.*

FULL DRESS.†

FAIR Reader, do not fear ! I assure you I am not going to touch your crinolines. No ; let them overshadow 'many a rood'—an acre, if you please,—still for the present they are safe for me. The base of the pyramid I abandon to avenging fire or the assaults of *Punch* ; my business is with the apex. In other words, what you name full dress or low dress is offensive to my sympathies and my judgment ; and I must remonstrate with you.

It is quite possible that, in what I am going to say, I may hurt your modesty ; but, depend upon it, you have your revenge *d'avance*, for, I assure you, you have often enough hurt mine. I could fill the whole newspaper with descriptions of my experiences. I could write a complete Natural History of full-dress ladies. The single subject of elbows, I may hint, has given rise to observations that would swell a volume. I confine myself here, however, to indication only ; I am content to suggest, and shall not have the indelicacy to discuss or illustrate.

* Written in July 1839, these lines (then named sonnet !) appear in *Tail's Magazine* for July 1842, with more than one error, but, to my intense disgust specially, with *bare*, which single word is the centre of the whole, misprinted 'Fair.' The initials C. B. stand for the pseudonym Charles Broughton.

† Written, at the request of a lady friend, in *The Englishwoman's Review*, for January 1, 1859.

But, is it defensible then? Dear, sweet, fair reader, can you defend that—not that dress—that no-dress? Just look at it? Take another peep in the glass! Have you a single word to say for it? Oh, ay, yes,—I know *that*—you have much to say for *yourself*: but have you anything to say for *it*—that dress-undress or undress-dress? Is there a single idea that corresponds to it? Is there anything in the eternal fitness of things to give a pretext for it? Can you give a reason for it? I know very well that it is the mode of the day, the custom, the fashion. But is there any thought at the bottom of this mode of the day? Is the custom, as Thomas Carlyle would ask, a veracious custom—one, namely, that is in harmony with the laws of the universe? Will Fashion just please to draw that stately robe of hers a little on one side, and let me see the ground she stands on? I know why people dress: it is for warmth—it is for decency—it is for ornament. But *you*—you *undress*! Of course, it is quite natural to undress too: we undress to change—we undress to bathe—we undress to sleep. But just tell me, dear Lucy, why did you and your sisters, Carry and Kate, the other evening, when papa asked Bob Burton and Ned Norton to dine with us—why did you and they, on that occasion, not dress, I say, but *undress* for dinner? A healthy youngster each, the main concern of both was a good tuck-in; and neither could be expected to be patient of distraction. It struck me that the shoulder of mutton was thrown out of countenance by that of Carry—to say nothing of the breast of turkey being spoiled for some similar reason on the part of Kate. Now, why was this? Had only papa and my old-fashioned self been present, you would have been in dress; why, then, just because Ned and Bob were there, did you happen to be in undress? I know we have the face naked, and I know we must have the face naked. I know too, that, for the most part we have the hand naked; and I know the reason why. It is for use. But are we to allege, then, any similar reason as regards the bust? No doubt, both Bob and Ned are eligible young gentlemen, each of them quite capable of effecting a very handsome marriage settlement; but did you actually hope to catch either by the quality of—really, I must say it—by the quality of your skin? And

did then an English maiden dress—no, undress—for inspection to an English gentleman, even as some Circassian animal might display her qualities to some unscrupulous Turk? Is it here, then, that Occidental Civilization and Oriental Barbarism meet? In the selecting of a wife, are English gentlemen to apply, and, in the obtaining of a husband, are English maidens to accept, the categories of a grazier or a butcher? If bodily quality is the criterion, why the limitation? Why not become the whole Circassian? Your eyes glow, dear Lucy; you indignantly resent the imputation; you point to dear, respectable, elderly Aunt Joan seated there, in similar array to that of Carry, Kate, and yourself, and, certainly, very flecklessly innocent of all design on either Neddy or Bobby; you point to her, as if you triumphantly exclaimed, ‘How can you impute to us such odious thoughts with *her* before you?’ True, dear Lucy; but, suppose I say, you are sly little chits, and keenly alive to the effects of contrast? But nay—I see the tears rise—I do not say that—I do not think that—I know that you dressed so, and that you sat so dressed, without one thought in your innocent little hearts a saint might blush for. I know that you dressed so because you thought it was just the way you should, and the only way you could dress—in the circumstances. But are you not shame-faced at the very thought that such a misconstruction should be even dreamed? You feel that it is wrong—you feel the whole absurdity—you will amend it all—you will change it all. And, ah, dear Lucy! therein you will reap your own reward. The prospective wife, the prospective mother will become to every eye all the clearer, all the fuller for the change; nor will the woman lose by it. Her charms will be all the sweeter, all the dearer for concealment, nor will indication of the inner health or of the inner beauty fail her; for still the hand, the face, the elastic tread, the easy gait, the light wave will give their evidence, and still the roseate mouth will stamp it.

I speak the truth, dear Lucy, you may depend upon it: Dress is for civilisation; undress for barbarism. These naked arms and necks and shoulders are out of place in

modern culture ; they are but remnants of the coarse times of our ancestors, when the indecent bust of the drawing-room was but the pendant of the disgusting drunkenness of the dining-room ; they are in harmony with the manners of those days only when Burns insulted the Lady of Woodley Park, or when Sir Timothy Thicket, escorting, outraged Narcissa, and her brother pardoned him.

People dressed, I said, for warmth, for decency, for ornament. From this it follows that the question is capable of a sanitary, a moral, and an æsthetic point of view. But will either of these enable us to see why, overshadowing the whole earth with the prodigality of your nether, you should astound the whole heavens with the parsimony of your upper habiliments? The moral point of view, though submitted to no regular discussion, has, I think, been sufficiently indicated, nor can the custom boast the smallest crescent of its countenance. I know there are defenders ; I know that Christopher North, in confidential communication with the worthy Shepherd, gives in adhesion to the custom ; but read him not, believe him not. Despite the golden poesy that offers it, accept no reason that is but sensuousness. Morally, the custom is untenable.

But let us see now, if Morality reject, will Health approve?

Born into this world, and into this climate, without a natural, we are compelled to demand from the ingenuity of man an artificial fell. And if there be one portion of our persons that more imperatively than any other demands the covering of that fell, it is precisely that portion which modern fashion has decided to leave bare and naked—bare and naked in the most dangerous circumstances, in the most ineligible places, and in the most susceptible subjects.

The particular portion, for instance, is the upper part of the chest, which, with the neck, constitutes the very region, the very habitat of cold. Diseases of the respiratory organs, in the forms of phthisis and inflammation, are, in these islands, alone more fatal than all the rest beside. Yet the respiratory organs are precisely those which, with curious inconsistency, we select to neglect. We cover the feet, we cover the limbs ; the hands themselves we cover. Tic will

not allow us too much to uncover the very face. As regards the chest, however, the seat of organs, nerves, and vessels the vitalist of the system, we *will* be hardy; the free breath of heaven shall have its own will there; and there, where we should make most exception, we shall make least exception.

Then, again, consider the scene and circumstances in which we perpetrate the exception. In the snug parlour, in the small family circle, where the fire is never far, we clothe our wives and daughters to the throat. It is for wide theatres, for airy ball-rooms, with all concomitants of carriages, gusty doorways, breezy passages, drafty windows—it is for these, presided over by vapours of the night,—it is for the dining-room of state, lofty, large, heated probably for the occasion, where the chill of general uninhabitedness thrills the marrow;—it is for such places as these, and in such circumstances as these, that we reserve ourselves the privilege of uncovering the very tenderest and most susceptible organs of the very tenderest and most susceptible subjects. For our own selves we are infinitely wiser, infinitely more cautious. *Our* broad chests, cased in incomparably thicker hides, covered often by their own natural fells, must be further fortified by chamois or by flannel, with additional defence in the shape of some dozen outworks. The strange inconsistency—men dress thus, and women so! So careless about the chest, too—in ball-rooms, say, admire the anxiety about the hand! Are not the contradictions monstrous?

But if the custom show thus in the light of moral and sanitary laws, how now does it relate itself to the æsthetical? Is there beauty in the custom?

The beauty of the beautiful we shall not deny: but only in the beautiful is there beauty, and not all are beautiful. I take higher ground than this, however, and assert that the custom of exposing the chest in public places and in public company, as practised at present, is supported by no single principle of art—even in the beautiful. Our low dresses, in fact, represent a compromise. They are not there simply on principles of art, as drapery to enhance; they are hypocritical and doublefaced; they would be artistic, but they

must be conventional ; art is their wish, but respectability their necessity. Endeavouring at duality, they lose each unity, and remain at the last unsatisfactory and ineffectual. But suppose them to succeed ; suppose them to prove themselves thoroughly æsthetic ; suppose them to appear and to be the lawful drapery of beauty—then, I ask, for beauty thus æsthetically draped, are public places fitting theatres, or public company meet spectators ? To enjoy the society of an amiable lady, at the concert, at the theatre, at the evening party, is it necessary that she should show me her neck and shoulders ? Is it to look at necks and shoulders that we meet in public ? And if they are not expected to be looked at, why act as if they were expected to be looked at ?

But I must stop. Positively, dear readers, the best use to which you can put those complicated skirts is to turn them up upon those simple shoulders.

SOCIAL CONDITION OF SOUTH WALES.*

IN the very midst of the most cultivated nation on the earth, a tribe is to be found speaking a foreign language, nearly uneducated, nearly uncivilised. And how few among us know anything about it ! Of New South Wales, divided from us by the whole globe, we are eager to hear the latest particular : of Old South Wales, seated in the midst of us, we hardly hear at all. Sydney and Hobart Town have become familiar to us as household words ; while Pontypool and Merthyr-Tydvil are as names unknown ; or as sounds which we may have sometime heard, but have now forgotten ;

* From *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, for Saturday, August 1, 1846, under the signature of Fluellen, and followed by two papers on the *Welsh Utopia*. Augmented experience induces me to add that Welsh workmen and workwomen are not worse, but, probably, much more innocent than their neighbours.

sounds, strange and foreign to our ears, reminding us of far-off regions—of places ancient, effete, and out of date.

Only now and then it is, when the poor Welsh claim kindred with Rebecca, wear petticoats, and manifest considerable ill-will to turn-pike gates: only at times of outbreak is it that a British Public can be understood to credit the actual existence of any such tribe.

Old South Wales, however, despite its uncouth Rymneys, Ebbw-vales, Tredegars, and Nantyglos, or rather in consequence of these, is at present worth a vast deal more to us than the whole huge territory of New South Wales. The buried treasures of Old South Wales have as yet been but scraped upon in a corner or two: she has still wealth in her bosom sufficient to keep the bellows blowing and the hammer falling for some two thousand years yet. From Abergavenny in Monmouth, to Llanelly in Carmarthen, and from these, over Glamorgan and the skirts of Brecon, to the Severn and the sea, more than ten times ten huge blast furnaces, with their blazing forges and their blazing coke-yards, cast nightly to the clouds a flame which may be seen in England. Day and night, the rush of their heavy breathings goes forth over the barren hills. Day and night, the molten mineral slackens not to flow into its appointed moulds. Day and night, are the sinews of men, and the thews of metal compelling it into strength and shape. And for what? To cover England with glittering roads of swiftness,—to give to Englishmen a power on space and time. The poor tribe then, who is effecting, and has effected, so much for us, is surely not to be neglected. Some hundred thousand of them toiling day and night for us in the damp of the mine,—in the heats of the furnace,—surely they deserve some recompense at our hands. And what recompense can we make them better than education?

Other things they either already have, or readily can have,—for there is no lack of money among them. The salaries of the numerous master-men and skilled workmen are liberal and comfortable; ordinary firemen can command from six to eight pounds a month; even miners and colliers can earn a wage of from fifteen to twenty shillings a week: and these earnings can often be doubled, or at least much augmented,

by those of their children ; for, be they growing or grown, male or female, there is work for them all. There is no necessary lack of money among them, then ; but there is lack enough of the wisdom to guide it. It matters little what money they make : less or more may make some difference in their drink, but little in their comfort. He who fails to melt his wages into simple cwrw (beer), contrives to effect his object by brandy, or even by wine.

It is education, and not money, that is wanting. Bodily and mentally, at present, their lives seem but one long disease. Their fare is coarse ; consisting principally of fat bacon, cheese, tea, bread, and potatoes : for whatever ducks, fowls, geese, or fresh meat they may purchase and carry home in the delirium of a Saturday, have all disappeared by the Monday ; and, for the rest of the week, the diet is, as for the preceding one, fat bacon, cheese, tea, bread, and potatoes. Thus existing in a mere alternation of hard work and drunken excess,—living often in damp, close, ill - ventilated houses,—sleeping often where the drunken head may drunkenly roll on the bare ground, in the open air,—unsupported by wholesome food,—inheriting from his parents the seeds of tubercle, scrofula, or other cachectic ailment,—bleached to a pallid blue by the darkness of the pit, or scorched to a copper-red by the flame of the forge,—thin, meagre, haggard,—the poor Welsh workman has to suffer the aches of mortality comparatively soon in life, bows down into a premature old age, and sinks finally into an early grave.

Such but too frequently is the physical lot of the Welsh workman : his moral can easily be understood to correspond to it. A large proportion of them speak no English ; very few can read it ; and still fewer can write it. Anything like a taste for letters is all but unknown among them. Libraries can hardly be said to exist ; and what few there may be are not among the iron-works. In Merthyr, the capital of the whole iron district, containing a population of upwards of forty thousand, the experiment of even an ordinary novel-circulating library we understand to have signally failed.

As may be expected, then, their enjoyments and recreations are coarse and sensual. Drunkenness and lack of

chastity everywhere abound. It is not uncommon for a girl with two illegitimate children, the one being but half-brother or half-sister to the other, to find herself a husband who is father to neither. For a girl, indeed, 'to have a child to her cradle ere she has a husband to her bed,' is an event of every day. In short, from the way in which actions, and the names of actions, seem indifferent to them,—from their primitive directness and unwithholding naïveté of speech,—their progress in civilisation can be readily inferred.

Practical religion, which would teach a man to live in this life only for another, has but small scope in Wales: in sundry localities, however, a ranting Methodism, something akin to dram-drinking, is, on certain occasions, very fervid indeed. In short, the whole want is, Education—something to humanise—something to elevate—something to infuse into them the high thought and noble feeling which it has taken so many ages—so many lives and deaths of Platos and Socrateses, of Alfreds, and Shakespeares, and Miltons, and many thousands more—to build up among us. It is not with their original nature that the fault lies. The activity, which, in some sixty years, has lit up their mountains with so many furnaces, and covered so many miles of England, and France, and Russia with paths of iron—that activity is an earnest that much dwells in them. There is in these very riots and vagaries, which we alluded to, a vigour that promises. Under the old-fashioned coif of Rebecca lurks a man. They are an impulsive people: of subtle, agile intellect, ready and susceptible; singularly prone to deference and obedience; but as *studious of new things* as they were in the days of Cæsar and Tacitus. A nature of this description as, in a state of barbarism, it can sink to be double-tongued, slippery, and slavish, or—by the same law of nature which makes a bully at once braggart and dastard—to be vindictive, overbearing, insolent, and tyrannical; so, in a state of civilisation, it can rise to the extreme pitch of courtesy, hospitality, intelligence, and refinement; and of this latter condition, it is our daily comfort and happiness to have many practical examples in the persons of our private friends.

Our remarks draw near to a close. Enough, we hope, has

been said to call some attention to these interesting remnants of the Ancient Britons—to these interesting reliquæ of the merciless Achilles of war and barbarian rapacity. We have endeavoured to speak of them as they are—‘Nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice.’ We have stated nothing but what we have seen with our own eyes—nothing but what we have had years’ experience of. We shall expect, however, the usual limitations to be allowed us: we shall expect the reader to understand that our observations have been directed chiefly to the population of the iron-works; and that, even in the midst of the degradation we have described, there must still be many instances of powerful muscles, green old age, intact purity, perfect piety, and high culture. We do not wish to speak ill of the Welsh; but we hope to have the power of speaking better of them; and we rejoice in these petitions, public meetings, newspaper paragraphs, and all the other signs of a spirited agitation for education in Wales which prompted these remarks.

THE NAVVIE.*

MANY a time, as rubbing our hands, we have passed briskly to our snug seat at once by the fire and the breakfast-table—many a time has the navvie’s figure, seen in that passing glance through the window we crossed, smitten us with misgivings; for, when we reflected that there he had been, on the side of that mountain, labouring away solidly and stolidly, picking out the earth, stroke after stroke, beneath his feet, and making a sufficient shelf thereon slowly, patiently, surely—these three good hours that we had been but steaming and stewing ourselves in bed, we could hardly bring ourselves to believe that we deserved our breakfast: and many a time we

* From *The Leader* for Dec. 21, 1850. I do not wish to be understood as quite subscribing the political or philosophical part of this paper now; but otherwise, there is, perhaps, something of picturesqueness and truth in it.

have resolved, like Emerson, 'that the workmen on the railway should no longer shame us.'

We have observed our friend for hours on that strange perch which distance reduced to a nonentity, drilling, picking, shovelling, and blasting; and we have wondered all the time how on earth it was he did not fall. We have been as attentive as himself, too, to the warning of 'Fire!' and have winked both eyes and ears (to talk Irish) more, probably, than himself, while watching the smoke of the fusee, and waiting for the shock of the explosion. And then, on the assurance of 'All right,' we have run (in thought) with as much interest as he to inspect the expected havoc of the blast. We know, the bigger the piece of rock that fell, the greater was his delight, and the greater was ours.

There is no time allowed the navvie for the gratification of curiosity, however: there he is again picking away in the same 'unhasting, yet unresting,' business-like fashion, while the earth and stones clatter down the slope, incessant as rain and continuous as rain, till suddenly, as 'Yo-ho!' rings out from end to end of 'the cutting,' the whole swarm of them falls instantly into new arrangements. It is dinner-time, in fact; the waggon stands still; the hand-barrow, laid down on its side, seems sprawling for help; the pick, the shovel, the jumper are idle on the ground. Some of the navvies, with their upper clothes thrown loosely over their shoulders, you see running to their not distant lodgings; while others stroll forward to some eligible spot where their wives or sweethearts await them with their dinners. Dinner with them consists of bacon, and tea or cocoa; but many, in lieu of the bacon, have only cheese. The pic-nickers fall often into groups from which the laughter and the talk are hearty enough, and loud enough, but hardly Attic. There is a numerous third class, however, who seem to have neither wives nor sweethearts, and who go not home to their lodgings. Members of this class we have seen picturesquely dotted along the middle of a cutting, at due intervals from each other, discussing their dinners on their feet—perhaps, too, in a steam of rain. The meal with them consisted simply of bread and cheese: and we assure the reader that only actual vision can convey the delightful manner in which

the clasp-knife dealt now with the caseous cube and now with the cereal ; and carried the sections of either unerringly to the grinders.

It is amazing to every onlooker that the navvie is not momentarily in receipt of a broken head ; so perilous is his place both below and above. From long experience, however, he has learned dexterity ; and you would be delighted to see him, when a *break* takes place, press himself closely against the side and escape, or throw himself boldly headlong with it, thereby, though half-buried, saving himself from the shock of 'the muck ;' and falling from great heights softer many a time than could have been thought possible. Poor fellow ! he is not always so lucky, however ; but may not unfrequently, be seen, pale, bloody, mangled, carried home by means of a plank on the shoulders of four of his comrades. Even in such circumstances, however, he is 'hard' and 'plucky ;' and pleases himself to shout for his pipe or a 'drop of summut.' In such seasons 'his mate' usually sticks very close by him ; cooking his victuals, administering his medicines, and smoothing the pillow for his aching limbs. He does not desert him, as we know, even when he lies blackening in cholera, but wets his lips and replaces the bedclothes on his restless limbs, till both are superfluous.

By and by comes the final 'Yo-ho' that sends them worn and weary to their scanty suppers, their never-failing pipes, and their early beds. Morning sees them on the mountain-side again, pursuing the same routine. Wet days, Saturdays, Sundays, and pay-days, with accidents, and 'the tramp,' are the only periods of change to them. Wet days do not seem pleasant to the navvie ; his pipe fails to give employment enough ; he seems as restless and unsatisfiable as the fowls. Not seldom, however, you hear and see him cheerfully cobbling his boots ; or, it may be, delightfully dealing a well-thumbed pack of cards. Of a fine Sunday, perched on a gate with his pipe in his mouth, or roaming about the country in bands, he appears happy enough ; still we are inclined to believe that even Sunday is not a very happy day with him.

'The pay' may, though we doubt it much, be a happy

time to him ; but it is a beastly time to all spectators. Till every farthing of his money has vanished, night and day he is drunk. There they are, he and his mates, for days and days after the pay, staggering about the public-house in the most disgusting fashion ; or, like warriors on the battle-field, lying strewn along the borders of the highway, asleep in the most brutal drunkenness, and in broad daylight too, perhaps not noon. The painful coarseness of these scenes is beyond words. We cannot say, however, that the navvie is a creature of any delicacy. He is nice in nothing. Many a time we have come upon him rising and shaking himself from—a couch that quite satisfied him—the corner of a haystack. We have assisted more than once, too, to recover him from the asphyxia induced by the carbonic acid gas of the lime-kiln, by the side of which he had stretched himself for the night. Neither is he averse to barns or other outhouses ; but vexes the farmer by his pertinacious attachment to these. We have even seen him located in a cold, stone cavern, and, ogre-like (would you believe it?) munching pleasantly a raw leg of mutton or cube of beef. For, if his lodgings are not nice, neither are his victuals. Bread and cheese are the staple of them, though he may have bacon, when he can afford it, and fresh meat once a week. He cooks for himself not unfrequently, when cookery is required ; but on the occasion we allude to, it seems the needful apparatus had been amissing, and he had e'en set his canines to work without it.

If such be his habits in regard to lodging, eating, and drinking, he is not one whit nicer in the article of clothing. His wardrobe is very limited. Often have we seen his only shirt—as we have come upon him in some secluded spot by brook, river, or canal—take on, beneath his own stiff fingers, a peculiar saffron hue at length, which to him was at once the token of cleanness and the signal to stop ; and many a time have we seen him stand dreamy by the hedge that held to the sun this same saffron-hued habiliment.

Among other things, it must be confessed that the navvie is seldom a favourite in any neighbourhood which he may happen to favour with his temporary residence. This we suspect to arise less from the mode of his entrance than from that of his departure. The fact is, the navvie has no prin-

ciple ; he lives to *slope*, and to slope means to slink off without paying one's debts. No genuine navvie believes this wrong ; it is his 'one cleverness, his solitary talent, his single bright point ; and it is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at that, in his pride of the same, the more he can practise it the greater is his glory. It is almost universally the case with him that, when he has been time enough anywhere to get comfortably in arrears with landladies and other natives, he gets quietly up through the night, makes up his bundle—not always omitting to include in it any stray knick-nack that may come by accident to hand—and *slopes*.

We are afraid, after all, that we have not succeeded in making the navvie agreeable to the reader. This brute, possessed of not one rational idea, that consents to such a beastly existence only for the delight of drunkenness and the triumph of sloping, you will hardly smile on. You know the work he does ; you know his firmness in accidents ; his steadfastness to his mate ; still he will not go down with you. And, when you meet him on his 'tramp,' by some roadside, with his brown cheeks and brown throat, his broad shoulders, hands of horn, and sturdy limbs, with his cap or billy-cock on his head, his loose neckerchief, his folded down collar, his blue striped slop, with the heart worked on the front of it, and his moleskin trousers turned up above his sufficient lace-up boots, you desire to get out of his way. You like neither him nor his mate. You think the things he has *sloped* with are in that sack on his back, and that bundle in his hand. You will not give him charity. You are still more averse to him if he wears earrings, and has a fresh young lass by his side, that seems, from the neck downwards, all Indian silk pocket handkerchiefs.

Well, reader, perhaps you are right. But then the question is : should all this be allowed ? Are there no arguments here for those 'Industrial Regiments' of Thomas Carlyle ? Are there no arguments here for association ? The strange condition of society—that of high refinement, high civilisation, this—God bless the mark ! and beasts for the harness—beasts of the most undeniable draught, the most unquestionable burden—ungroomed, unstabled, fed on the most villainous straw and husks, that know neither hay nor corn—

allowed to roam at large, unbadged, uncollared, and unticketed, trampling on the gardens of the poor industrious, and eating up the substance of the struggling widow and the unwilling pauper. In the whole railway group is not to be found one well-placed figure. Can the contractor who employs the navvies, who knows their fortunes, and who lives by them, conceive himself such? Can the tommy-shop keeper, with the perfumes on him of rancid cheese, sour bread, and rusty bacon indescribably mingled? Can the ganger, 'hollering' six days a-week, for the sum of thirty shillings, the most blasphemous imprecations? Can the navvie himself believe himself a well-placed figure? It is monstrous that such a dissolute—such a loose, incoherent, inarticulate, miserable condition of society should be longer tolerated! Impossible to change it! How so? Could not these beasts of burden have, at least, each a number and an appointed place? Could not their several capabilities be approximately known and registered? Could it not be made impossible that any one of them should fall aside from the highway and die, as we have seen him more than once, in a corner—starved, unhelped, unnoticed, and uncared for? Could it not be made impossible that any one of them should fail of sound cheese, sweet bread, and fresh butter—that any one of them should fail of a shed over his head, or a clean shirt on his back—that any one of them should be found a drunken log upon the turnpike—that any one of them should steal off like a thief in the night, putting his brutal tongue with brutal triumph into his cheek, with the idiotical chuckle that he carried in his haversack the hard-won earnings of that pinched widow who had made his bed, and done sundry other acts of kindness for him this month and more? We will not believe it. We will believe that all of them can be *ordered*. We will believe that contractors gangers, and navvies are all susceptible of *law*; that all of them can be so placed that the work shall be done, and better done, and yet that each of them shall be bodily, morally, and intellectually looked to and cared for, so that, in the individual and the aggregate, the best and largest result shall issue.

The function of the navvie is a good one. He is breaking

down the narrow, the limited, the sectarian, the particular, and bringing rapidly the large, the general, the catholic, the universal. Look at him, even in this island, what work he does ! How he tosses Scotland into England, and spreads England into Scotland ! How he kneads those Welsh mountains, as if they were but clay in his fingers, and scatters all impediments easily, and pours upon the astonished Celt the light and air which the terrible and hated Saxon has been, for so many centuries industriously, but unconsciously accumulating for him ! And the doer of this remains in the state we have described ! We hope it will not be for long, however. We hope that Association will speedily enable him to hold up his head with the best of us. At all events, we hope ere long to see him no ownerless beast of burden, wandering at large to the misery of himself and the increased misery of the already over-miserable, but a clean and wholesome, a disciplined and drilled, an educated, healthy, and happy soldier of labour, proud of his regiment, proud of his cantonments, proud of himself.

G E E N E M E R.

O DREAM-BORN sloth ! will then the rose

No longer blush upon the frame ?

No hyacinth his lids uncloze ?

No lily waste ? no violet faint with shame ?

Or, if the listless needle plot,

Languid, such drooping shapes to feed,

Will but the meek forget-me-not

Burst, unexpected, from the bleared brede ?

Must now thy books, too, never fail,

Unread, to drop upon the knee ?

Sudden, the smitten lute to wail

A broken-hearted wailing, wailingly ?

Canst thou not stoop thy hand to pour
Caresses on thy spaniel's neck,
But falling tears shall vex him sore,
Pawing and whimpering as his heart would break?

Canst thou not coax thy singing-bird—
Cheeping sad question, rueful-eyed—
Not coax him with one weary word,
But sobs shall slay each syllable beside?

Thy steed—Ah gentle!—wherefore droops
Thy neck on his? what poison preys
Deliciously within, and stoops
Voluptuous langour over all thy days?

Make me thy confidant, O sweet!
Unbosom all thy sad estate
To me. To me the woe repeat.
The pain give me—on me let fall the weight.

Nay, sit not on the ground, nor press
Thy pale hands on thy dripping eyes.
Up to my arms, lorn loveliness!
My tears with thine—Nay, nay, arise, arise!

Come, lay thy head upon my neck,
And weep thy fill—weep there the shower
That thus o'erladens thee. There take
Thou shelter, sweet, bastioned as by a tower.

Ay, maid! No shaping of the will
Art thou, no mock of phantasy!
Thy veins run blood, warm, palpable;
There, in thine eyes, the very thought I see!

O come, then, to my arms, thou all!
Let me enfold thee gently so—
Hold thee, and fold thee, and enwall
Thy beauty from the soil of mortal woe!

Surely, I will protect and guard
Thy tenderness from aught of harm!
Repulsive am I not, nor hard
Of heart, but as a very woman warm.

Surely, I will be good and kind
To thee : O surely I will love
Thee whole and sole, and I will wind
Thee in my heart, all tender as a dove !

Autumn 1846.

L O N E L Y.

My heart, my heart
Is the delicate cup
Of a wilding flower
Apart, apart,
That gathereth up
The dew and the shower
Of love, of love,
Till filled, till filled,
Quite filled to the brim,
With the rich clear drop
Hung over the rim,
The delicate cup
Must needs, must needs
Let fall its sweet stores
On the nearest flowers,
Or weeds, or weeds.
Ah me, ah me !
Ah for a sweet shape
To let fall the weight of my love on.
O to hold, and to fold,
To cling and caress,
To weep and to sleep
In the rich recess
Of the deep-folded bosom !
But now, but now,
My falling shower
On horse, or hound,
On bird, or flower——
So weary, weary, and unmeaning !

Sept. 1844.

P A R T E D.

AH yes, there has been many
A happy wedded pair ;
But never, never any
Who loved, and loved sincere.

'Tis they are happy only
Who wed for wealth or state,
While true love sitteth lonely
Divided from her mate.

O mourning, mourning, mourning,
Sits true love all the day,
O mourning, mourning, mourning
For him that is away !

1845.

A T H O U G H T.

(FROM A PAPER BURNED.)

THAT moody carking will
Which keepeth strict account of grievances,
But as for favours and advantages,
Has no receipt, gives no acknowledgment.

1839.

A SABBATH THOUGHT.

CALM Sabbath now hath come again,
From toil to call
Us weary,
Worn, that stoop :

A calmer cometh swift amain,
 To change it all :
 Why fear ye ?
 Sweet, why droop ?

1845.

LE TRISTE METIER QUE DE VOYAGER.

(1842—*Union Street, Aberdeen, by Monument with
 Bon-Accord on it—in the dark.*)

AH me, ah me, what shall I
 Or think, or say, or do ?
 Ah me, ah me, what shall I
 Nor think, nor say, nor do ?
 Weary, weary, all I
 Or think, or say, or do :
 Weary, weary, all I
 Nor think, nor say, nor do !

THE LAY OF THE SHUTTLE.*

BE at it—have at it !
 'Tis my blood and my brain ;
 But at it—still at it !
 'Twill avenge me again.

From the crow of the cock till the middle of night
 Am I weaving and weaving, to get me a bite
 Of potatoes and salt, with some straw for my bed :
 And I'm weary and wasted—I would I were dead !
 Be at it—have at it, etc.

* From *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* for June 1845. This, as a friend said then, was taking the 'shilling' rather 'on the soft side.'

See my wife—she is pallid ; blue, bloodless, her lip ;
And the babe from her bosom seeks vainly to sip ;
And my children are stunted, starved, wicked, I ween :
O my God ! that such sights on Thy earth should be seen !
Be at it—have at it, etc.

O, they think that I weave them a garment of pride ;
On a mantle of Nessus my shuttle is plied.
Like a snake 'twill enwreath them, and wrap them in flame ;
And their charmed cups shall quench not the pangs of the
same.

Be at it—have at it, etc.

Yet I will not in plot or conspiracy join ;
But still patient I'll sit at this hard task of mine ;
And, still patient, this shuttle for weapon I'll wield,
Till at length, without bloodshed, I conquer the field.
Be at it—have at it, etc.

SONNET OF THE SIGNORA MARATTI ZAPPI,

TO AN OLD FLAME OF HER HUSBAND'S.

DONNA, che tanto al mio bel sol piacesti,
Che ancor de' pregi tuoi parla sovente ;
Lodando ora il bel crine, ora il ridente,
Tuo labbro, ed ora i saggi detti onesti.
Dimmi ; quando le luci a lui volgesti,
Tacque egli mai qual' uom' che nulla sente ?
O le turbate luci alteramente
(Come a me volge) a te volger vedesti ?
De' tuoi bei lumi alle due chiare faci
Io so ch'egli arse un tempo, e so che allora . . .
Ma tu declini al suol gli occhi vivaci ?
Veggio il rossor che le tue guancie infiora,
Parla, rispondi : ah non risponder, taci ;
Taci, se mi vuoi dir, ch' ei t'ama ancora.

(*Translation.*)

LADY ! who once my heart's lord pleased'st so,
That of thy graces yet oft talk is bred,
With praises, now of hair, and now of red
Lips that could syllable what chaste thoughts owe,
Tell me : when thou thine eyes on his didst throw,
Fell he quick silent, as whom sense has fled?
Rose then—O the strange eyes impassioned !—
Rose they on thee in the dear way I know ?
Of the twin lights within thine eyelids I
Know that he burned one time, and know that then . . .
But thou throw'st down thy quick eyes suddenly,
Blushes I see upon thy cheeks obtain :
Speak, reply !—No !—Ah speak not nor reply—
Speak not if 'tis to say these loves remain !

1853.

THE FOREIGN COUNTRY AT HOME:

OR, THE MINERAL FIELD OF SOUTH WALES.*

No. I.

HERE, for centuries has the Principality sat at the elbow of the Kingdom, and been all but wholly overlooked. This is more especially the case as regards those southern counties ; for remoter than the northern, and enjoying no similar reputation for the picturesque, they saw not on their borders any populous foci of manufacturing Saxons to attract the emigration of the needy, or supply the immigration of the curious. In such circumstances, the peculiar language and the peculiar people were allowed to rise up as a nearly impassable wall of division, till certainly within a century, and almost within the last generation.

Some stray Saxon did, at length, however, though it is hard to say how, overleap this barrier and enter on these

* From *Leigh Hunt's Journal* for January and March 1851.

secluded valleys—with feelings similar, we may suppose, to those with which even now the awed adventurer bursts on some unknown region of the far America. There, among the lonely hills, from which the startled sheep and uncouth shepherd looked down on him in apprehension and surprise, he lit his solitary furnace, and sat by it till the flame uprose to heaven and covered counties and glared on England. Even now, the possession of all these vast appliances is almost wholly with an individual, almost wholly with a Saxon. There are only some half a dozen iron masters in South Wales; and their names—Crawshay, Guest, Bailey, Thompson, Homfray, Fothergill, Hill, etc.—twang, almost all of them, of the north of England. These are but few individuals to achieve such an enormous result; and the time they required is almost as remarkable for brevity as they themselves for paucity. For we may state that time boldly to have been hardly more than fifty years. These fifty years they have turned to good account, however; in these fifty years these half a dozen individuals have contrived to blow a blast, and kindle a flame, that is heard and seen from the steppes of the Tartar to the savannahs of the Indian. Like necromancers, they have thrown mountains into throes, the molten lava of whose eruptions has descended on these barbarous steppes and uncivilised savannahs, in lines and paths by which the angels move.

There are names in that half dozen which, in London and elsewhere, are perhaps better known than his; but every one actually on the spot knows well that the Crawshay is, *par excellence*, the Welsh iron master. Richard Crawshay, the founder of the family, and of several others besides, was but the grandfather of the present William Crawshay; and, if not the first, was about the first who cut the sod of these mountains. His life would be interesting and instructive; little, however, is known of it unless what his grandson was pleased to tell us at a dinner in Merthyr. He was of respectable Yorkshire parents, rode his own pony to London, sold it for a few pounds, entered an ironmonger's shop as a lad, rose step by step till he possessed a business of his own and accumulated capital. What first attracted him to Wales, does not appear; but he seems to have been always of a

shrewd and speculative turn of mind. His grandson humorously records his application of these qualities to the pushing of flat irons and the outwitting of the London washerwomen. I have been told also that he once boasted, on the occasion of a public dinner, that he had purchased at a Government sale a lot of old ordnance, on which he had received from the exigencies of the Egyptian Pacha, whose envoy had arrived in town that very day, and for that very sale, but just too late,—a profit of (I think, but I am almost afraid to state the sum) some £90,000, 'a handsome fortune for his eldest daughter, and that without more ado than scratching his name on a bit of paper.' A well-known, somewhat talkative, mineral surveyor in these regions, is my authority for this; and I can no further vouch for it.

The descendants of this shrewd and vigorous speculator have not played the prodigal with their inheritance, but have extended and increased it vastly—so vastly that they stand not last in that strange group of millionaires which is the monstrous and unnatural product of these latter ages. The Crawshay family, however, is not the only one of millionaire eminence in South Wales: there are others of 'the half dozen' eligible to the same position.

Not so much, then, the heap of iron as of gold that these men have piled to themselves, is it, that has at length attracted the curiosity of the nation. The nation may be as curious now as it pleases, however: its curiosity is all too late; for it is highly improbable that such heaps of gold will ever be riddled out of the Welsh ore again. The day has gone by for that. These half a dozen iron masters have possessed advantages by no means transferable. They have, for the most part, obtained their materials for nothing, nearly nothing, or (by sub-leases) less than nothing, and have had no costs but those of mining, manufacture, and transport. These costs have, undoubtedly, grown gradually less and less, by diminution in wages, improvements in processes, and vastly facilitated methods of transport. In all these three particulars, the contrast between now and formerly is very striking. The careworn workman of the present day, restricted often to bread and cheese for sustenance (for I have been assured that the old indispensable bacon

must be given up), looks abject beside that devil-me-care swaggerer of the past, whose money even wine cannot melt fast enough; and these broad highways, easy waterways, and swift metal ways look marvellous in comparison with those straggling strings of mules, each laden with bars of iron, leaving the lonely furnace loneliness wheezing in the valleys, to wander over the lonely hills, in weary progress to the coast. The diminution of these costs, however, is not sufficient to enable the manufacturer to realise anything like the same result as formerly. Old leases fall in daily; and rent will henceforth infinitely increase the price of the materials, as competition will henceforth infinitely diminish the profits of them. The Welsh iron masters, then, have reached their *acmé*, and must now, like all other sublunary things, culminate and decline; and he, among them, who desires to maintain his place, must now look as sharply to his pence as heretofore to his pounds. Nay, it were advisable, perhaps, to look now even to the farthings.

Still I am inclined to say, that there are yet great possibilities here; and that, though recklessness cannot be trusted for a moment longer, still industry may. Goethe exclaimed of Germany: 'Here, or nowhere, is America!' and with as much propriety the change may be rung of 'Here, or nowhere, is Australia!'—here in old South Wales, in the very midst of us, is New South Wales!

The untouched mineral wealth here, both in coal and iron, is yet immense, and will make our kettles boil for us a thousand years after the fuel of England and Scotland is quite exhausted. In time, then, it must call around it some of the most numerous populations in the island.

Railways which, with trunk and branches, are now as a vital tree in Britain, shoot rapidly hither, absorbing our produce and bringing that of others in exchange. How fast the wall of separation yields and falls! Everywhere, the English bonnet replaces the Welsh beaver; and the Cymraeg falls back from the Saisenaeg. 'Dim Saisenaeg! dim Saisenaeg!' (No English, no English!) said the astonished Thomas Carlyle, 'dim Saisenaeg from every dyke-side and house-corner! I think the first thing the poor bodies have to do is to learn English!' That is precisely the thing

they have to do certainly ; but if the grim master come again, he will find it swiftly adoining. The changes which even six years have wrought are simply amazing. Cardiff and Swansea think themselves English now ; and exclaim to Merthyr and Aberdare, like Dr. Caius, ' Follow my heels, Jack Rugby.'

In the wilds, where, some forty years ago, for miles and miles over the barren desolation, no object moved but the sheep, the sheep dog, and the shepherd—in those very wilds, where, some forty years ago, an old Welsh crone, not without misgivings, passed her hand inquiringly from the head to the heel of an English stripling, muttering, ' Diew ! diew ! a Sais is he ?' and exclaiming at length, in the most posed astonishment, ' N'enwdyn ! the sam' as we, the sam' as we he is !'—in these very wilds are scores upon scores of mighty blast furnaces, and thousands upon thousands of populous homesteads. The rapidity with which such places as Nantyglo, Tredegar, Rhymney, Dowlais, Merthyr, Aberdare, etc., have grown and risen is altogether wonderful : the reader will excuse, however, the omission of statistics, which, content with the general statement, he would himself, in all probability, skip.

If the country has been so recently and so imperfectly known, the people, to my thinking, remain still so, and more so. Gray's poems called attention to their ancient literature ; and there were, as there are always, a sufficient number of leisure-laden antiquaries delighted to grapple with such disinterments. These bones and skeletons of the past, then, have been well cleansed and well studied, till now, to my belief, their lesson is read. But it is quite different with the living people. *They* have not found their Gray yet, nor their antiquaries to unsepulchre, cleanse, re-articulate, and demonstrate them. They remain a virgin quarry of unknown statuary. At least I, for my part, have not yet met in literature any one piece of genuine Welsh characterization. Shakespeare gives us Fluellen and Sir Hugh Evans ; and Smollett, borrowing much from him, follows with his Morgan and Winnifred Jenkins. These, so far as I can see, have hitherto constituted the lay figures of Welsh characters to the whole literary guild ; but I cannot help pronouncing them utterly unlike the originals. A genuine trait has not

escaped Shakespeare in his Owen Glendower ; but the others I cannot acknowledge to be Cymry at all. The essential Welsh characteristics, and even the peculiar Welsh-English, are no more to be found in these—less, perhaps—than the true Irish or Scotch in Captains MacMorris and Jamy.

Take up Carleton and see the genuine Irish, or Galt, and see the genuine Scotch ; and believe that the contrast between them and Shakespeare in their nationalities, is not greater than that that would arise were there an analogous Welsh writer to be found for the comparison—in this nationality. In the brave and blunt Fluellen, although I have certainly seen his like, as an exception in Wales, I cannot see the cowering and supple outline of the modern Welshman. With the generous, spontaneous Morgan, though him too I know as an exception, I am equally at fault. Humphry Clinker, Matthew Bramble, Tabitha Bramble, are, I should think, of any country ; and as for the silly and mincing Winnifred, she is much liker a cockney waiting-maid or bargirl, than the sturdy, rosy wenches we see here on the tips or in the fields.

In fact, we have in South Wales the possibility of endless volumes, not only of new scenery but of new character. In the manners, conceptions, dialects, and general nature of these Shir-gar (Carmarthen) labourers, carriers, seedsmen, stocking-men—of these Glamorgan limers, miners, colliers, puddlers, ballers, squeezers, cokers, hauliers—of these ironmasters, mine-agents, mill-agents, gaffers—of these preachers, parsons, doctors, shopkeepers, farmers—of these (in addition) English contractors, navigators, bagmen—of these Scotch mechanics, woodwards, gardeners, teamen—and of these Irish hodmen and beggars : in these, I say, are to be found the materials of new writing to an infinite extent yet. There is accessible here, even a fund of new adventure ; for the Merthyr Riots, the Newport Riots, and the Rebecca Riots abound with that. In short, there is here such an *ensemble* of fresh scenery, fresh manners, fresh dialect, fresh characters, fresh anecdotes, and fresh adventures, that, for the sake of the reader (and still more of myself), I heartily wish I were a Scott, a Galt, a Banim, a Lever, a Dickens, or a Thackeray ; but, gulping down lugubriously, with what resignation I may

the recognition that I am unfortunately not so, I have yet a certain self-satisfaction and self-complacency in having it in my power to proclaim the suggestive fact to those who are. So ye, 'our brother bubble-blowers,—we mean volume-blowers—blowers of three volumes'—fall on and welcome ! There is plenty and to spare.

No. II.

As a youth, like Jean Paul—if you will be good-natured enough to allow me, 'sic parvum componere magno.'—I never was known to be great in geography, but small rather, in fact, very very small ; a defect which, I am sorry to say, the Parvus, unlike the Magnus, has not yet set himself to abolish. My surprise was great then, when, long before I ever dreamed of being in Wales, I saw, in a surgeon's consulting room, a young Welsh sailor, who could not speak one word of English, unless—not Walez—but Wales or Welss be allowed the designation. The peculiar short, innocent, and smiling way in which he pronounced this word, remains, together with his face, figure, and poor blistered hands, quite on terms of acquaintanceship with me ; and constitutes my first Welsh experience.

My second occurred when I, a genial youth, high the Clerk of Copemanhurst, with three other genial but older youths, high respectively Locksley, Athelstane, and the Black Knight, students all, strode it all the long summer days gallantly up and down a certain lovely and delightful watering-place. All objects had interest to us in those days, and one of those we met oftenest, and enjoyed the most, was a tallow-faced, full-figured, middle-aged woman, clad in rather plain and common habiliments, and seated in a green-painted wooden box on three wheels, the moving power of which box was a slender commonplace-looking man, of from thirty to thirty-five. There seemed some command in the dark angles of the cheeks of the lady, and some resignation in the bland jaws of her gentleman hackney. This

appearance was too picturesque to escape our attention. Locksley told us—*us*, Athelstane, the Black Knight, and the Clerk of Copemanhurst—that the dame in the chariot, finding herself possessed of a small independency, incapable of self-transport, and insecure of her donkey, had adventurously advertised herself and her substance in the newspapers, with the view of procuring, in the person of a husband, a substitute for the distrusted animal.

The present motive-power of the chariot, Locksley continued, had eagerly responded, and after due inspection been happily accepted. He had turned out, the freebooter avouched, a somewhat creditable husband to fall from an advertisement, and—quiet in harness. He did at times, certainly, said he of the green, when he chanced to have a copper in his pocket, suddenly vanish from his charge, but reappear with a blander smile and a more deferential stoop than ever. The close of the intelligence was, that he was a Welshman. ‘Humph! a Welshman!’ said the Black Knight. ‘Eh! a Welshman, is he?’ said Athelstane. ‘A Welshman!’ said the Clerk. And all four, having thus disburthened themselves, looked for a moment questioningly into each other’s faces, till Athelstane burst out with a loud guffaw and the memorable distich—

‘Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief, etc.’

All of us, you may guess, joined heartily both in guffaw and distich; for we all felt that the former was at our own ignorance; and that the latter contained the sum total of the knowledge of the whole of us—Clerk, Athelstane, Black Knight, Locksley and all—in regard to Wales and the Welsh.

During that summer, then, you may well suppose, ‘There’s Taffy!’ ‘Here comes Taffy!’ were among the pleasantest events of the day. I recollect we encountered the lady and the chariot on one of those occasions when Taffy, having happened to possess a specimen of copper in his pocket, had gone to deposit the same, leaving his charge in the very middle of the highway. The countenance of the lady looked black! her hands were folded on her chest; and her

lips were screwed expressively together. She seemed anything but comfortable, and was becoming rapidly less so under the approach of a large herd of ill-behaved cattle. The Black Knight, however, stood chivalrously to the rescue, gallantly supported by the bold outlaw, while Athelstane with unusual vigour blew out his well-speckled cheeks, into an alarming 'shoo!' meant for the cattle; and even the Clerk showed himself not unsympathetic. We had the pleasure to witness presently the quiet return of the bland Taffy, who only wiped his mouth and smiled. The lady said nothing; and the chariot moved on, leaving Knight, Clerk, Athelstane, and Locksley looking for a considerable time delightedly after them.

There are other passages in the joint adventures of these genial four, perhaps not unworthy of the reader's ear; but as they are not further germane to the subject, for the present I leave them. It is singular, however, that of these four, the two who were certainly the most ignorant of anything Welsh, rejoice now, the one in his Welsh author-craft, and the other in his Welsh wife.

I now approach a much later period. When the order came to me in London to proceed to Wales—South Wales, my ignorance of geography was the cause again of many curious feelings to me. Pontypool! I had never heard of the place. What could it be like? What would the people be doing there? Was it there Rebecca and her daughters were? Should I see Rebecca? Then how I betook myself to the map, and assured myself by actual vision that there was such a place, and that it was spelt Pont-y-pool! Pont-y-pool! What a strange old-world sound it had! It looked coifed, somehow: it was a witch, and dressed like a witch, and the handle of the broomstick came up to her chin! Then the names beside it—Nant-y-glo, Tredegar, Sirhowy! Abersychan, Ebbw-vale, they were all coifed, they were all witches, they had all broomsticks; and there was Owen Glendower coming in among them with the 'Moldwarp,' and 'the goats were running from the mountains.'

How pleased I was to write to my friends that I was going down to Rebecca and her daughters, and that the way was by Bristol, and through Newport, where Frost and the

Chartists belonged to ; and how I spelled it Pont-y-Pool, and figured to myself the smiling surprise of the whole group !

There seemed nothing out of the way in the Welsh steamer that lay in the lowest of the Bristol basins. There was a red-faced little captain ; there were shawls, mufflers, and great-coats aft, horses amid decks, and Irish forward ; there was also a seat in the side of the hutch over the stairs of the cabin : all, in short, was quite as usual. I recollect the red rocks on each side of the Avon were well worth looking at, but the river itself—was it a river ? Ah, but we should come to the sea presently—we were in it now—we had passed Pill—was *this* sea ? Were these dirty, yellow clay-washings sea ? How unlike the seas I knew—clear to their deepest depths of unstained crystal—into which it was such a joy to look over the vessel's prow, as the beak below struck into white opacity the all but invisible water !

The human being I specially remember during this voyage was a tall, light, stiff, elderly Welshman, who walked with a stick, a slight stoop, and an eternal simper. He accosted me early in the voyage, and talked of—our destination—Newport. It was Newport, Newport, Newport,—nothing but Newport ;—there never was such a place as Newport. It had the largest dock-gate—I think it was a dock-gate—I took it, at all events, to be the largest of any known gate on any known dock—and I was duly impressed with the intelligence. ‘Yiss, sure, it was a famoos place Newport—it beat—it beat—what did it beat, sir ?—it beat Cardiff !’ ‘Did it ?’ I ejaculated, with surprise, trying, at the same time, to weave within my brain some relative simulacra of these two unseen, unknown great places. ‘Yiss, indeed ! yiss, to goodness ! it beat—it beat—it ’ud beat Bristol !’ Even this, however, did not raise in me any very immense incredulity ; for I must own I had, for what I had seen of Bristol—the lowest basin, namely, and the narrow, yellow, muddy ditch they called a river—anything but respect.

I was not the only one he addressed, however. There was a great raw-boned Scotchman, with red hair, six feet and a half high, whose ear he repeatedly climbed a-tiptoe to, and whom I overheard saying—‘Ay, mun, dee ye say

sae? Od, it'll be anither Glesscae !' There was an Irishman, too, who asked him—'Was it ever in his luck to see Cark?' A Bristolian also amused me much. He was so short, and stout, and heavy, that it was politic in him to retain his first and only seat during the whole passage. I recollect he struck me, by the contour of his abdomen, to have swallowed an aggravated orange; and the expert way in which he swirled into one mass and chucked sixpenny-worth of brandy—not into his mouth—but at once into the very middle of his aggravated orange, I shall never forget. He always shook his head recusantly at my friend; but his Bristol *rs* rolled so that I could not follow him well.

There was a little man with big whiskers and spectacles, likewise, whom I watched my friend attack: the answer was such an abrupt, curt, sudden hee-hee-hee, like the neigh of a small pony, accompanied by such an instant retreat to the protection of a stout little gentleman who sat by the pilot, that my friend was left standing in astonishment. (I was astonished myself.) By-and-by he recovered, however, and, shuffling along the deck, passed this group of two; passed and passed again, casting glances as he passed. At length he stopped, and dropped into the ear of the stout gentleman, 'Newport beats Cardiff out and out at this present, however!' Now, the stout gentleman was a round-faced, little gentleman, all cheek, with just a sprout of a nose sufficient for the purposes of his barber; and the moment these words were uttered, that all cheek of his blackened, and his sprout of a nose whitened, and he cluck-clucked, gobble-gobbled out angrily such a series of stutters about the docks, the Cardiff docks, and his most noble the Marquis of Bute, that, ghastly and gasping, the Newportite was fain to withdraw himself to me. For solace, he told me his story yet once more; and it would have been worth seeing my courteous air of attention and acceptance, while I could scarcely decently cover the agonies of my internal laughter, and his rueful dubiousness of aspect while he scrutinised me for some manifestation of the demoralising influence which his rejection by the Cardiff man must have produced on me. On the whole, however, I think I must have been a capital subject for this

Newportite to show the picture of his darling to. I recollect he asked me if I was an Irishman.

How I looked out over the bows of the steamer, and across the broader opacity of the Severn for the Welsh hills, expecting, like a fool, to see something unusual about them! When, at length, they hove in sight through the mist, I remember I thought them green and low! We entered, by-and-by, another little ditch, much like the Avon one, or smaller; smaller it must have been, for the steamer took the ground occasionally. Now it was that I looked for the huge dock and the consequent contained navy, but all in vain. After some time, I remember a deserted-looking bridge stood up ahead of us; and we came to a stop by the deserted-looking right side of the ditch. I hired a quiet-looking steerage passenger to carry my luggage; and got into a terrible row therefor with a man on the bank who called himself *the* steamer-porter, and wanted to put my traps on his hand-barrow whether I would or no. I stuck to the no, however; but had plenty of abuse for my punishment, and sundry additions to my style.

I overtook my friend, the Newportite, on the bridge, walking brisker than could have been expected, and snuffing up the air with uncommon satisfaction. I passed him with a simple 'Well, we have arrived, sir!' for I hadn't the heart to ask for the dock. I have since heard, however, that there really is something superior in that kind at Newport.

I recollect nothing of Newport, but that the street end by the bridge, where the Pontypool coach awaited me, for one, was breezy; that I saw a string of Irish limping along the middle of the road; and that the policemen wore cutlasses. As I passed through the town on the top of the coach, I caught a farewell glimpse of my friend the Newportite: he was tapping at a little green door; and I made sure there was hot tea with toasted cheese and leeks ready within for him. Years have passed; and I have never seen Newport since: and these are very wretched impressions of mine, but I find them genuine.

Night, now, very soon fell upon us; and as I sat on the top of that coach, I snuffed up the air into my nostril with a strenuous and sincere endeavour to detect its *Welshness*.

How I listened, too, to the conversation of the driver, with all the unknown and almost unseen individuals who, at any place of temporary stop, accosted him ! Not a word escaped me—I was so eager to pry into differences. There was a different accent certainly ; but it was all English still ; and, though it was very dark, there seemed the usual sort of trees and hedges at the side of the road. One woman, I recollect, who sat beside me, was very liberal (to herself) with her pocket-pistol.

By-and-by, we rattled impededly over some new-laid stones ; passed between some houses ; and the coach stopped. A servant-man issued from an opened door ; and asked ? ——— myself. I gave the coachman his gratuity ; descended ; and stood till my luggage was lowered. The coach rattled off into the dark night ; the man shouldered my luggage ; and I followed him unknown into a house unknown, to face people unknown, in this unknown, unseen, strange witch of a place that was written down Pont-y-Pool.

PART III.

PONT-Y-POOL.

I RECOLLECT I went to bed on my first night in Pont-y-Pool quite impatient for the dawn to lift the curtain from the picture. In the morning, I saw a good many of the poorer class of inhabitants before I had an opportunity of inspecting their abodes ; I remember they looked by no means discrepant from my previous conceptions in regard to coifs, broom-sticks, and witches. The old women, muffled in their long, dark, straight cloaks, and with their sharp faces peering from between the full borders of their white caps, over which their old taper-crowned hats arose, were *sib* to nobody, if not to Graymalkin. And the men with their unsteady eyes and their thin oval countenances, their generally spare forms, their coarse, flocky, ill-made, blue coats with brass buttons, accorded not insufficiently with similar ideas ; especially if they *sib*-added corduroy small clothes buttoned on worsted stockings, and superadded, under their hats (many of them

flaccidly shapeless) a three-cornered cotton handkerchief tied, in token of illness, over their heads, around their faces, and beneath their chins. The conciliatoriness of their attitudes, too, looks, and intonations struck me forcibly ; they seemed quite simple, harmless sort of creatures ; and looked as if they just waited for something—anything—to go off with, and would take the cuff as readily as the bite. Their accent too, and use of words—I heard as yet no Welsh proper—were very peculiar ; and tallied by no means with the samples I had met in books.

My general conception of Pont-y-Pool is of a defile between two mountain ridges ; one of which—that on your visionary left hand, reader !—though wooded here and there, is in the main yellow, plashy, and barren, while the other—the park principally of Mr. Leigh—is beautifully fresh and green, with tree-clusters and shrub-clusters varying it tastefully ; and between these ridges floats an atmosphere of blue smoke overhanging a narrow line of houses, perhaps a mile long, creeping up windingly through the gorge, or, better, the gutter beneath. The population is employed, as in other South-Welsh localities, in the raising of coal and iron, and the manufacture of the latter ; and you have in all the sub-defiles, at either extremity of the town, the usual dirty, sloppy tram-roads, with horses dragging rows of tram-wagons on them, and smoky furnaces, and flaming forges, and rubbish-tips, and engine-houses, and incline plains, and all other accessories of this sort of industry.

Of places in Pont-y-Pool, I recollect, in particular, a steep lane, bordered by sparse rows of cots, which was appropriately termed Sow Hill ; for the huts and their adjuncts bore a wonderful resemblance to the appurtenances of that cleanly creature.

With the names of localities, by the by, how puzzled I was, —and how hopelessly I floundered amid the intricacies of such words as Pontnewynydd, Pentwyn, Golynos, Cwm Bran, etc., till the irritation of my Welsh host pronounced me an extraordinary speller ! I thought it a highly justifiable *revanche* to ask him if Paralysis for Paralysis were not original and eccentric.

Pentwyn was a very peculiar defile, I recollect, that wound

up along a dirty little brook, between lustreless blue tips, destitute of even a blade of vegetation, with windows of meagre cottage-rows glittering over their tops, or at their bottoms, or anywhere about them. A great square house—some office, I suppose—in the middle of the gullet, not far from the furnaces, black, gloomy, and quite grown over with a moss of soot, always appeared to me an appropriate mansion for Beelzebub. I never passed it but I thought I saw his eyes through the dull, dim windows. The great, round breast of the Garn Mountain beyond it, yellow and barren, sprinkled all over with the thinnest, the coldest, the bleakest looking houses that man ever shivered to gaze at, is another object I cannot forget. Then, how strange it was to ride through the deserted furnaces on the top of the Varteg Hill, and see the substantial structures of the works all falling into decay. The horse's hoofs struck one with fear; and seemed to rouse from their lurking-places all manner of *uncanny* creatures. I think there are no objects so melancholy as wheels awry, and prostrate cylinders, as grass-grown tram-roads, and inclines all rusted out of glitter; as piecemeal buildings, and rows of abandoned cottages, whose windows glisten on you idly, but ghastly and meaningly.

From the hill over Cwm Bran, I recollect there was a fine view of the country that stretched and spread to Newport and the Severn. I think it was about my only delight in Pont-y-Pool, to catch from that hill the far glitter of the sea; and if to that the white glimpse of a sail were added, the charm was complete.

Many other recollections occur to me; but I am not writing my life, and mean to trouble the reader with no more than may enable him to realise some idea of the people and the place. I must not omit, however, the figure of a school-master. There was a stout little fellow, with ragged, dusty, snuffy brown clothes, and a rabbit-skin cap, through the top of which his own hair appeared. He had a broad, smooth, ruddy-sallow face; and looked to me like one of those men who dyspeptically fatten within doors, without exercise, amid dust and cobwebs. They told me he was a teacher! He snivelled and stuttered, *not* her Majesty's English. I wondered what he taught, and whom he taught. But I

think I was as much surprised with the farms and farm-houses as with anything else I saw here ; and with the description of one of these I shall now wind up this paper. I confess that it is not one specially belonging to Pont-y-Pool ; but it is generically.

Turning from the highway, you dismount from your horse to open that wooden gate which stands across the termination, or commencement, of that stony pathway. The bars of the gate are fractured, loose, oily, and green. The hinges are of twisted withes, and the hasp is a loop of straw at present over the gate-post. You displace this loop, you push open this gate, which drags on the ground, and gives you, between opening and shutting, and inveigling your horse through, no small amount of trouble. With soiled hands or gloves, you re-ascend your steed then, and proceed upwards in a narrow lane, just capable, here and there, of two horses passing one another. It is covered with rougher and bigger stones than you fancy, and, in wet weather, is a brook. You have good evidence of this, for you find one-half of the pathway washed down the slope on your right hand occasionally ; and you cause your charger to hug the prickly fence as you cross the chasm, more closely than is pleasant either to his hide or your clothes. These fences, by the by, are of the most irregular description, and, in general, owe many obligations to an indigeneous crop of briars, brambles, and willows. The pathway, on the whole, looks as if it had not been used for the last forty years ; and you are frequently tempted to stop and turn, especially as now and then it winds from, rather than towards, the house you aim at. Moreover, you come ever and anon upon *faults* ; that is, on spots where the path seems abruptly to terminate. You are induced then to put your horse on a footpath through a wood, which footpath again becomes speedily plural, and throws you into a perfect tornado of apprehension and annoyance. Or, perhaps, you are tempted to enter into a plashy field where the deep holes, in which have sunk the feet of other horses, are so numerous, and divaricate so, that you don't know which angle of the field to make for. By and by, perhaps, you find you are not far from being right by the welcome reappearance of some

trace of your first friend the fenced, stony pathway on the other side of these bushes. Then, struck with instant terror of being a trespasser, you make a desperate effort to carry these bushes and regain your guide. Most probably you take some time, now turning down and now up, to succeed in this ; and then, with sundry tears, and scratches, and twig-pencillings, you only succeed to fail ; for your guide speedily forsakes you again, and leaves you once more forlorn and hopeless by some other wood or some other field. The fact is, the legitimate path to a Welsh farm-house is always on the opposite side of the fence from what you suppose the right one ; and this apparently regular, hedged-in pathway is only a pitfall and a snare, and probably never was known to have been used by any mortal man but yourself.

Somehow or another, and after a perfect novel of adventures, you find yourself lost in a little wood of twigs : you are blind yourself ; and your horse, between scrambling through bushes, and stumbling over roots, and slipping on green stumps of cut trees, is driven quite wild, and you get apprehensive of your powers of management ; you dismount and make him fast somewhere and somehow, but in such dubious fashion as haunts you afterwards. On foot now, you make your way through bushes and fences, and across calf-deep fields, and over rude dry-walls tumbling all abroad, and gain at last the purlieu of the farm-house.

You find yourself now in a little chaos of bulging, dry-stone structures, with heaps of rubbish, not in one place, but in all. Everything, in fact, looks so indescribably ruinous, confused, desolate, and deserted, that you are at a loss what to do. You cannot, for your life, make out which is cow-house and which is stable. Nay, worse, you cannot, for the life of you, make out which is out-house and which is dwelling-house, and suppose you do decide on this latter, you cannot, for ten lives of you, make out which is back and which is front. That rank little paddock, with its forlorn cabbages and droop-headed leeks, with its tumble-down borders of stick, stone, iron-hoop, old barrel, thorn-hedge, bramble, briar, or defunct chair, can never be the garden ! At length, however, as you stumble noisily over the rubbish-heaps, or into the pits between the stones that somebody

dreamed to have used as flags, you are relieved from these perplexities, if thrown into others, by the sudden yelp and rush of some half a dozen of a peculiar race of small, blue-gray, long-nosed, milk-eyed collies. A human voice follows them, shouting out some such sounds as 'Ki ! ki ! rast ! rast ! tau zone ki ! On't bite, shir ! she not bite !' Apprehensive and watchful, in spite of these assurances, you approach the speaker, followed by your canine attendants, now silent and snuffing at you. You stoop under a low doorway, in obedience to invitation, and cross over a guttered threshold, turning short on the left hand into the apartment your inviter leads you. You are some time before you can accommodate your pupils to the change of light ; but presently you find it is a kitchen you have been introduced into. You have not gone more than a step or two but you find yourself by the fireplace, which is in the same wall as the doorway through which you turned short. A wooden chair, glossy and black, is brought for you as guest ; and you sit down opposite the fire. The fireplace, you find, occupies the whole of one wall, except, in one corner, the door of entrance, and in the other, another door ; the fire, however, is itself the smallest, worst fed little fire you can well conceive, and looks a nonentity in the middle of that gigantic chimney. From the wall behind and from those at the sides, a broad ledge runs out on a level with the height of the grate, and clasps this little peep of a fire. The inner corner, on the left hand, yawns into a cavern, which is the mouth of the oven. Billets of wood protrude from it ; and, hung over the fire, you see bundles of smaller wood drying. These bundles, however, are not sufficient to prevent daylight from descending the chimney. Within this capacious chimney, you may possibly perceive a rope line with clothes across it. The fender you discern to be the segment of the iron wheel of some defunct tram.

Well, there you are opposite this bit glimpse of a fire, to which the farmer seems unable to get you near enough ; for his speech as yet is a constant exhortation to you to 'come on the fire,' to 'sit on the fire' ; and you observe that his swavers between its own functions and that of *she*. The landlord's son is sitting on the ledge on one side of the grate,

and his wife on the other, while he himself is lost in a capacious chair, such as you see only in Wales. It is wrought by the hand, and consists of sort of basket-work, sort of mat-work, sort of bee-hive work. It is like a soldier's sentry-box; it has a back and a canopy; it has arms for you to rest on; it has no apparent legs, but is worked all round, from the seat down close to the ground. It is not a chair—in fact, it is a kind of small apartment; and no breath of air from the back or the sides, from beneath or from above, can by any possibility reach its occupant.

Well, there you are respectively, while a bunchy, red-armed, red-faced, tow-headed wench is rubbing up plates behind you, tramping about in an uncouth, hurried way, and with shoes that sound like the feet of horses. The landlord is a thin old man, toothless, with a small conciliatory countenance, and eyes that lick you. The goodwife looks sturdier, and more on her own centre; she is younger than her lord, and has a round, well-coloured face, with bright black eyes. The boy on the other side of the grate is a lout: he seems the very emblem of helpless vacuity.

The landlord having now got you as near the fire as he can, observes to you, proud of his English, 'Tish fine dai!' (Pronounce dai, dye.) To which, you having responded, he adds, 'Verree fine dai!' There is then a pause, which is terminated by the landlord opening and holding towards you a small, round-headed, flat tin-box containing snuff—light high-dried Welsh; and at the same time uttering the interrogative word 'Shnuff?' and the deprecatory ones, 'Take pinch!' You accept, you inhale, you sneeze; he puts his finger on the cuff of your coat, and bringing his white thin face to yours, he says, 'Shnuff good! 'tish good shnuff!' The goodwife then says some Welsh to you, at which you looking aghast, both say, 'Meelk! ha' dracht meelk!' You refuse or accept, and in either case, especially the former, there is another painful pause. You put various questions, but you are hardly understood, and you find the landlord's English limited to, 'I 'stand you now,' or 'I not 'stand you now,' with 'yiss, yiss!' 'ay, sure,' and a few such phrases. So finding yourself precluded from the use of your tongue, you fall back on your eyes.

The room is raftered, and so exceedingly low that you cannot walk erect without bringing down about your ears the contents of some basket, or sending your entertainer's best hat rolling on the ground, or, at all events, spoiling your own by contact with some side of bacon. The floor is an earthen one, and of very uneven superficies;—in fact, you had seen the bacon, but it was the irregularity of the floor that caused you to lurch against it.

Opposite the fireplace, and taking up, like it, the whole of its own wall, except two doors in the corners symmetrically facing the other two, is a black, well-polished dresser with a well-filled plate-rack. The wall on your left hand as you front this dresser is pierced by a small window, under which is a little clean round table of white wood with some three-legged stools beside it. The opposite wall has also a little window, away in one corner of it, but it consists of a single pane. On the ledge of it, there is a flower in a cracked black teapot, and a Welsh testament lies beside it. Along this wall is a sufficiently long wooden table, or perhaps a large chest.

The chair you sit on came through that door opposite to the one you entered by; and you find that it belongs to a small flagged bedroom, possessed of a small window and a small fireplace. There is a bedstead with blue-checked curtains, a chest of drawers, a corner cupboard, and a chair or two. The other door, at the other extremity of the same wall, leads into a small pantry.

The remaining door, that at one side of the fireplace and facing this last, leads up, by a stair that only custom can enable you to ascend with impunity, into a boarded loft. There is no furniture but one or two stump bedsteads with very inferior adjuncts. The naked slates or thatch are above your head, and beneath your feet are naked, ill-fastened planks, that gape from each other and give you glimpses into the kitchen below.

Such is a very fair specimen of the Welsh farm-houses in the neighbourhood of the iron-works. The majority, indeed, are much, much inferior to this; and the few that are superior, you would scarcely call superior; perhaps they are superior by virtue of possessing a long-legged copper

warming-pan. You are pleased, in fact, with the appearance of almost nothing in these farm-houses. You find, in coming in at the first door, that if you had not turned short into the thick-walled second doorway immediately on your left, but had gone straight forwards into the dark, you would have been among the landlord's three or four cows ; and if you had had light enough to see by, you would have been astonished at the roughness, rudeness, and irregularity of all the appliances. There is a confused, tumble-down, neglected look everywhere, in short ; and you wonder mightily how things are managed at all. The landlord seems to do nothing ; come up when you like, the old man is either just as you find him now, or limping in a desolate fashion, with the help of a stick, from stepping-stone to stepping-stone through the debris of his farm-yard ; and you lose yourself in speculation as to how the deuce, and when the deuce, he gets his farm farmed.

The truth is, he has two or three horses, and they, under the guidance of his sons, are at this moment hauling underground. That lout on the fireplace should have been also there to-day ; but he has injured his foot. The hire of these horses brings in a little money ; and one way and another, he and his sons manage to get out of their farm food for their horses, their cows, their pigs, and their geese. And if they be situated on an upland, as they generally are, they superadd to these some sheep.

In taking leave of your landlord, you complain of the road ; and he acknowledges, 'Tish bad wai, verree bad wai, angcommon !' You ask for a better, you ask for *the* way, but are fain to pretend an understanding of the explanation, and betake yourself to your way, and thereafter to the turn-pike, glad at heart when, after your old difficulties, you once more reach the same.

PART IV.

ABERGAVENNY TO SWANSEA.

I HAD certainly no reason to be dissatisfied with Pont-y-pool on the score of insufficient Welshness ; for, in all conscience,

it was Welsh enough. I learned, however, that, whatever it might be in reality, it was nominally not Welsh but English. Monmouthshire, in short, had been taken into England, and ranked now as an English county. Ponty-y-pool was still England, then—how provoking! To think that I had not escaped from England even in a place that spelled its name with a small *y* in the middle! It was quite teasing that I could not yet say I had been in Wales—that, in fact, I might never be in Wales at all; and I longed to be able to set down my foot on soil that neither map nor mortal could deny to be Welsh.

The opportunity came sooner than I expected; and, leaving the Welsh of Pont-y-pool with tears in my eyes, and the firm belief that they were the most simple, courteous, credulous, and primitive of peoples, I found myself one fine spring afternoon on the box of a rattling, dashing, thorough-going mail *en route* for Merthyr and Swansea *via* Abergavenny. The coachman was communicative, full of the most knowing experiences in water-vermin and the dodges for taking them, and I, in the excitement of the fresh, bright afternoon, and the new adventure, the best of listeners. I did not miss, however, the glorious landscape of rich, rich fields that lay far away, for miles and miles, upon my right; and, in the midst of the necessary ejaculations of delighted surprise at the feats of otters, badgers, and what not, I kept muttering to myself ‘beautiful Monmouth, beautiful Monmouth!’ I had to stay a night in Abergavenny, much to my own satisfaction, for *Humphrey Clinker* had made it a glorified creature of the mind to me. I did not stay much in mine inn, then; nor did I repair to the billiard-room, which coachee, mistaking my tastes, but, at the same time, gratifying me amazingly therein, had recommended to me; but I strolled up and down the town, and was never tired of poking into every street and lane I chanced upon.

In the morning, too, I had a little available time, and that I applied to a walk into the surrounding country. Truly, it was most beautiful! No man need be sorry to go and live in Abergavenny. There is one green mountain there, of singular shape, which it is quite a joy to gaze on; there is

a lovely, pastoral stream, too, clear, and bright, and musical ; there are pleasant, pleasant roads, that well out away into pleasant, pleasant fields, between sweet hedges, and past neat gateways with honeysuckled lodges ; and the town itself is as clean and wholesome as mind can wish for. Altogether, Abergavenny abides in my remembrance like the perfumed leaves of some sweet-briar I had plucked. Yet I obtained no more than a glance of it, and was speedily on my way towards stranger quarters. And often have I thought to myself since of the crowds of pilgrims to Chepstow and the Wye who, in all probability, have stood in Abergavenny by its one strange hill, and never fancied to themselves the still more wondrous regions which the Merthyr mail had power to open to them. I do not think there is in the kingdom such another ride as this, from Abergavenny to Swansea. I do not believe that to be carried to New Zealand would present much greater contrasts than these iron highlands have for him who as yet only knows the well-cultivated lowlands. The clear Welsh air ; the long ridges of hills that run like combs over bleak, bare commons ; the exquisite miniature little valleys, that nestle in the mountain-bosoms down from these ; the equally exquisite, rich, narrow straths, that lie like green ribands between two parallel hill-ranges ; the uncouth houses ; the uncouth towns of such ; the uncouth language, the strange shapes of pliant forms and supple features ; the gigantic iron-works, that, amid blue, excavated mountains, thunder with the most indescribable din, and belch forth fire and smoke upon the scene ; all is novel, strange, and unexampled ; and all these things the ride from Abergavenny to Swansea abundantly possesses.

Leaving the rich scenery around Abergavenny, and soon after the coachman has pointed out to you the position of Crick-Howel, you are whirled through the most unsightly naked defiles, up steep precipices, and across the necks of mountains—up and on, over barren moors, through long cold villages of such mean aspect, that the gentleman you meet on horseback seems strangely out of place ; and you wonder if he does, or if he can, live there ! On you are borne, in this way, past the very skirts of all the great iron-

works—Clydach, Nant-y-glo, Sirhowy, Ebbwvale, Tredegar, Rhymney—on, till, coming down Dowlais hill, with Merthyr at your feet, you are lost in amazement. That mountain on your left is certainly from the hell of Milton—there is not a vestige of green on it; blue, smoky, sulphury, it has an excavated, underground look everywhere. Then the houses—and the furnaces—and the strange population—you never saw such sights.

The coach changes horses here; and, as you stand on the steps of the Castle Inn in this strange place, you feel quite floaty. This, you are told, is the scene of the Merthyr riots; and you feel still floatier as you body forth before your eyes a picture like the following:—

Prone to novelty, as of old, excitable and blustering, the thousands of these motley savages have gathered into crowds, with inflamed faces that promise perdition to the whole universe; they sway hither and thither before the door, clashing their staves, clicking their fowling-pieces, and gnashing forth their never-ending volleys of 'Diaouls.' They have already cleared several shops of bread, cheese, and beer; and one house they have wholly gutted of its contents. One old woman, escaping thence with a jar of whisky as a lawful spoil, shouts out, simple soul, 'Tyma Reform! Tyma Reform!' 'Reform has come! Reform has come at last.' Some sixty 93d Highlanders have been hurriedly marched from Brecon; and one-half of them stand now in file before the door you stand on, leaning on their muskets, and eating their bread and cheese, while the scummy river of the mob, hoarse in Welsh, flows around and between them. Their comrades are within the house; and the iron-masters from the windows, by threats and conciliations, endeavour to disperse the rabble. In vain: clamour, bluster, swagger, and gesticulation, are as rank as ever; and it seems a very explosion of 'diaouls.' The Highlanders, however, or, as to this day they are called in Welsh, the Little Petticoats, are quite impervious; Welsh oaths fall dead on them; they eat their victuals. Suddenly, there is a cry, a rush, a bustle: the muskets of the inapprehensive soldiery are seized by the mob, and crash now on the skulls of their owners. Stunned, stupid, bleeding, hat-

less, weaponless, these few Highlanders are tossed upon the waves of the crowd, still struggling for the haven of the inn. The sword of an officer is sheathed in the body of a ring-leader. The sharp crack of musketry rings on the ear. The mob fires into the windows ; and bullets pass between iron-masters. The Little Petticoats within, indignant at the usage of their comrades, reply with interest ; reply and again reply. The street is clear : the mob has dispersed suddenly into their cabins or into the defiles of their tips. But, all night long, there are tumult, agitation, apprehension, and excitement everywhere. The gentlemen and the soldiery repair to Penydarran House, and fortify the same. Brave messengers, with determined hearts, ride through the darkness to Cardiff, to Brecon, to Swansea, in quest of arms, in quest of military. One of these makes the journey, on the same horse, in the same night, twice between Merthyr and Cardiff ; bringing arms and driving through the crowd each time scatheless. Morning breaks : from Tredegar—Rhymney—from all over the hills—from Newbridge, from Aberdare, from Hirwain—from every colliery or iron-work, far or near, come droves of workmen to swell the numbers of the insurgents, who, wild with excitement, fire off the conquered muskets, and threaten and gesticulate in the most furious fashion. Two black flags are seen ; and the Hirwain men brandish one dipped in blood : the very hands of its bearer are incarnadine with the same ; but it is the blood of a calf—a calf killed for the purpose ! The tips have their thousands ; the hill over Aberdare has its thousands ; and, on the stony precipices that overhang the Brecon road, there are other thousands. These last have allowed a detachment of yeomanry sent to meet and escort the ammunition and remainder of the Highlanders momentarily expected from Brecon—to pass ; but they intend to keep them there. The mouth of the defile is blocked up by a numerous band ; and all up the precipices, there are others busy unfixing the rocks, and ready to roll them down on the heads of all who may be bold enough to try a passage.

The Swansea Yeomanry, mounted in hot haste, come tearing up from Swansea, gallop sword in hand through all but deserted Hirwain, and, with the most fearful menaces,

valiantly threaten the bodies and frighten the souls of the few peaceable inhabitants who, remaining behind, have still curiosity enough to turn out and see these heroes. But into your houses again! we Swansea yeomanry, we dash at you and flourish the glittering steel above your heads; into your houses! we will settle you, ye savages of the hills, ye scum and riff-raff that dare make a disturbance in his Majesty's dominions. Ha! they flee before us! we have made clean work of it. On to Merthyr then, my gallant men, and do the same; are we not from Swansea? But what cloud is that on Aberdare hill awaiting us? Workmen in thousands! How slow our horses have become! The cloud approaches, breaking on us as with a thunder-storm of Welsh oaths. We are powerless here. Gentlemen, gentlemen! leave us our lives. Here are our pistols! here are our swords! all but that one—for God's sake, gentlemen, do not take that sword, it was at the battle of Waterloo! 'Hurra, hurra! hurra for the sword that was at the battle of Waterloo!' Ride back, gentlemen yeomanry, through deserted Hirwain! jingle what metal trappings may still remain to you, and pass through swiftly!

Thus brawl and bluster the dingy multitudes of the hills; and still the gentlemen are at Penydarran, with the handful of Little Petticoats. The Little Petticoats are at their ease, however, and know what they know. They are increased to about a hundred now; for the ammunition and the reinforcement have found a way over the hills to them. There are also some three hundred mounted yeomanry. The various multitudes have now collected into one multitude, and have settled on the Merthyr tips. The gentlemen, with the yeomanry and the Highlanders, leave their fastnesses now, and march upon them. The Riot Act is read; they are called on to disperse: they refuse. Forward! brave mounted yeomanry! The brave mounted yeomanry are sluggish. 'Right and left, then,' shouts a brave man, 'and my little Highlanders will do it.' The hundred Little Petticoats step to the front—forward upon thousands: they level their muskets: they are in act to fire: an iron-master throws himself before them, yet again beseeches the mob;—succeeds. The motley

rabble melts from their eyes like snow ; and the Merthyr riots have come to their conclusion.

Now begins the chase of the law ;—ringleaders are seized in their beds ; guns, swords, and other spoils are recovered. One man—a simple fool of a fellow, the leader of the attack—swings round beneath the gallows ; the hills are found in anecdotes for a generation ; and the Little Petticoats remain personages of almost mythic renown.

Such is the picture you body forth, as you stand on the steps of the Castle Inn, floatingly. Suddenly military music strikes on the ear, surging the heart, and filling the eyes. A brass band comes up the street ; behind it is a brawny figure, with the front, power, and reputation of a young Antony. That is an iron-master ; and that is his surgeon beside him. They are followed by an orderly procession of well-dressed workmen, with sashes, banners, and other paraphernalia.

The coach is ready again, however, and you must go. On through Merthyr, and past Cyfarthfa ; wondering at the monstrous blue tips and the castellated building with lovely grounds in the midst of them. As you mount the hill, you see, down in the valley, tents erected : thither wends the procession you have seen ; and, as you listen to the romantic story of the coachman, in regard to the iron-masters in question, about their amazing personal strength ; their recklessness of heat or cold, of wet or dry, of night or day, of time or season ; their power of doing the work of any one workman, in their gigantic works, above ground or under ground, as well as that workman, and better than that workman—as you hear this tale, I say, and as you see the scene of festivity before your eyes, and hear the glorious music floating up the valley, and re-image the heroic figure that you saw, knowing, moreover, that he is a millionaire, and that these are but his workmen beside him—you believe that the old times are resuscitated—the grand old times, when master mingled with man, rest with toil, and festivity with drudgery.

Thus you dream ; but the coach stops not. Up the hill, higher—higher—over such a barren mountain. Behold now, at your feet, another valley, into which you must descend !

There, on your left, nestling in that mountain-bosom, is Aberdare. Down straight before you, on that bleak common, that runs, strip-like, along that bleak comb of a ridge, smokes little Hirwain. Down the hill, on through that meagre, naked, squalid-looking Hirwain. Over the common, down into Cwm Neath; and now, is not this lovely? A long, green riband, flat, narrow; between two such picturesque mountain ridges, stretching to the sea.

You stop not, however; you come to low-lying Neath, with collieries and a seaport. Leaving Neath, you pass through the great copper works—the works where three-fourths of the copper in the world are extracted from the ore. Merthyr was unsightly enough; but what do you think of this? Foul boats in foul ditches, ghastly woodwork, chimneys coated with pollution, low, tumble-down huts smoking in the midst of such inconceivable lurid refuse, the vapour of verdigris for an atmosphere, and all around for miles bare and herbageless—blasted by the poisonous copper whose ‘savour of metal sick’ your palate is even now vainly endeavouring to extrude. Courage! you have passed them. Swansea receives you; cheerful, cleanly, wholesome, somewhat *fast* Swansea, with the bay of the Mumbles and the sea-breeze, and the sea-view glorious and refreshing.

Such is a rapid sketch of the ride from Abergavenny to Swansea; and I hope that the reader will now believe that for grandeur and for squalor, for beauty and for ugliness, for importance and for meanness, for interestingness and uninterestingness, it is unsurpassed in the kingdom.

THE ENCHANTED ISLES.

So fresh they seem, so invitingly fair,
Those isles in the sapphire sea ;
Yet are there but few who approach would dare
Those isles in the sapphire sea—
Those two little isles like emeralds green
Dropped into the sapphire sea—
From the sapphire depths of the sky serene,
Dropped into the sapphire sea.

For they say the sky, on a day, was rent—
The blue sky was rent in twain ;
And forth from its sapphire bosom it sent
Two diamonds instead of rain—
Two diamonds, where lie those islands green,
Dropped into the sapphire sea—
From the sapphire depths of the sky serene,
Dropped into the sapphire sea.

And the ocean bore them upon her breast,
And round them the sea-weeds grew,
And with their green arms the white stones caressed,
Till islands they seemed to view—
Two fair little isles like emeralds green
Dropped into the sapphire sea—
From the sapphire depths of the sky serene,
Dropped into the sapphire sea.

But how from the sky those diamonds fell,
And two islets green should grow,
Is more than anyone ever can tell,
For this is all that they know :—
Those two little isles, like emeralds green,
Dropped into the sapphire sea—
From the sapphire depths of the sky serene,
Dropped into the sapphire sea !

AMELIA.

W H Y ?

'WHY, wherefore, why,' the breezes sigh,
'Must we, for ever wand'ring, blow
O'er trees and flowers, secure that grow
In one fixed resting-spot?'

And, 'Why, why, why,' the flowers cry,
'Are we thus born so bright and fair
To scent awhile the thankless air,
And then to fade and rot?'

The sea roars,—'Why, unceasingly,
Against the shore must I thus dash me—
The helpless sport of winds that lash me
To fury as they list?'

Drearily, 'Why,' as they glide by,
The moments mourn, 'must we pass on—
Scarce sooner here than we are gone,
Unreckoned and unmissed?'

'The azure sky, why, tell us, why,'
The golden sunbeams sadly grieve,
'Our glorious home why must we leave,
On this gross earth to lie?'

And, 'Why, O why,' says man, 'am I?'
'Why do I live? why is my life
Beset with troubles, cares, and strife?
O why is life—death, why?'

AMELIA.

ON JANE H. S. WHEN A GIRL.

BY REV. A. R.

LOVE peeps amid those tresses fair
That circle round that brow of white,
Like wavy clouds that wait the moon
In the still night.

Love laughs beneath the silken lash
Of thy mild, radiant, speaking eye,
A fairer star than evening brings
To deck the sky.

Love sits upon thy ruby lip,
And whispers gently of a kiss,
And raises dreams of life with thee
In wedded bliss.

Love leans him on that stainless neck,
And points him to that bosom pure :
Happy the wight whose hopes on earth
Rest there secure !

OGREBABA, THE BODY-SNATCHER.*

It was on a gusty, rainy December's afternoon of the year 18— that a knot of students might have been seen huddled shivering round a somewhat scanty fire in the dissecting-room of the ancient university of G—. The tables were not altogether devoid of the materials proper to the place, but the day was too miserable for work ; and only one enthusiastic plodder, with dribbling, coppery nose, still hung

* Among the earliest papers.

over the beloved task, plying assiduously the forceps and the scissors, but compelled, from time to time, to relinquish both, and foster his fingers in the recesses of his more grateful pockets.

All was indeed cheerless and comfortless : the light, coming dully through the rain-bleared skylight, fell chilly on the leaden floor, and the oily-moist macerating tubs, and the wooden benches, and the drying preparations, and the skeletons, and the unctuous tables with dead men's bones or dead men's mutilated selves on them. All was indeed dreary, dull, and comfortless. Ever and anon, the wind rolled lugubriously in the chimney ; the slates rattled on the roof, and the rain, drifting swiftly on the blast, fell plashingly, in a flood, against the weather corner of the court beneath.

The conversation by the fire had dropped to an occasional word, startling, as it broke upon the ear, to speaker as well as hearer. Some, with open book on knee, sat looking at the coals, idle : the majority, pipe in mouth, smoked on, puff after puff, noiselessly, in silence.

The internal sympathised with the external ; the shadows of the material fell on the spiritual ; till even the entrance of their Professor could only seem something mysterious, and awake in each the idea of a messenger freighted with woe. Nor did this feeling subside when the learned personage, whose approach was thus received, turning short on the group, asked suddenly : ' Which of you knows Erfine ? '

All stared aghast, their hearts knocking at their ribs.

' Does any of you know the town of Erfine ? '

' I do,' gasped out at length a youth of some nineteen or twenty, who sat holding a book on one knee and a skull on the other—' I do ; ' and his cheeks, marble-pale but the moment before, flushed scarlet.

' Intimately—do you know it intimately ? '

' He goes often enough there, at all events,' waggishly slipped in the mischievous Will Johnstone.

The Professor, looking at the speaker, perceived his meaning and smiled. The smile was caught up and passed, like a reflexion, from lip to lip. He of the skull, OGREBABA by name, flushed deeper and deeper ; but bashfulness and

confusion swallowed up all outcome of anger ; and in reply to the Professor, he stammered out ! ' O yes, sir, I think I know Erfine.'

' The churchyard—do you know it ?'

' Yes, sir, I have been in it often.'

' Well, what say you to a visit, on such a night as this—not to your sweetheart, mind you, but—to the churchyard ?'

All looked to the skylight and shrugged their shoulders, excepting only the individual questioned, who, like one who had suddenly seen light in the dark of confusion, answered catchingly : ' I will go at once, sir, if I can be of any use.'

' But it is a long journey, and the night is rough, and there might be rough work, and I should like a stronger man'—the youth seemed to sink collapsed while the unconscious Professor continued—

' The matter, you see, is this—I am told a prime subject was buried there yesterday—and it is an easy churchyard to open, for the walls are low, and, what is better, the soil is sand, and may be dug with one's fingers. It is well watched, however ; but then on such a night as this—in short, if there are three lusty fellows among you willing to go with this young man here, I will find the horse, and all the needfuls.'

There was a considerable pause.

At length, Corrigan, an Irishman, made answer that ' may be, he'd be taking the trip himself.' And for such a trip Corrigan was peculiarly well qualified. At the first glance you saw nothing beyond the common in his frame ; but when once the decision of the man, exhibited in actual fact, had attracted your especial notice, then it was that his round chest and singularly muscular arms were, once for all, done justice to. His lips were protruded into a hard, habitual smile ; and there was something of cruelty about his eyes and the corners of his brows : in short, to all who examined this Irishman narrowly he appeared to be, what he really was, cold, cruel, impassable—active, sinewy, powerful.

' Well, very well ; we shall say nothing against *you*, Corrigan,' said the Professor. ' Now, who else will go—somebody that can drive now ?'

' I will go,' said Will Johnstone, ' since Ogrebabe's going, and I can drive.'

All eyes were now turned on the new candidate, who bore the infliction with the utmost composure. The smile on his thin lips seemed to anticipate, yet take derisively, a low estimate of his personal powers on the part of the spectators ; for he was but of middle size and middle stature, with the promise of activity merely. His trimly-cut, straight, fair hair was accurately parted, and brought strictly in a half curl to the corners of his high, round forehead. Fair, linear brows overhung a cold grey eye that twinkled a laugh. His cheeks, smooth, palish, freckled, were somewhat contracted under the cheek bones. His lips were tense, and kept his chin always blue. His nose was small, straight, and decided. There was in the carriage, if not in the shape of his head, something that denoted firmness. Altogether, you would have fancied to yourself, from the whole expression and appearance of the man, that in conversation he would be given to *chaffing*, and that, as a surgeon, he would be enterprising and imperturbable.

‘We just want one more, and who’ll be he?’ said the Professor.

‘Mr. Muller, I am sure, will join us, and complete the party,’ replied Johnstone, with mock sincerity.

Mr. Muller, the gentleman thus addressed, more generally known as Big Muller, exhibiting the appearance of the very man adapted for such an enterprise, seemed in no ways desirous of the distinction, however.

He was a large man, with a full, well-coloured, whiskerless face, and a mop of a head, with rough, tufty hair on it. He had a swaggering gait and an elbowing intrusive manner, a loud voice and an insolent laugh. He carried always a huge cudgel ; and had contrived in many ways to make himself a universal pest. Of late, however, he had figured in a new character—in that, namely, of Will Johnstone’s last-found butt. Will looked a dwarf to him ; nevertheless, he had found out the trick of the monster, and was in the daily habit of trotting him out, in the coolest, most unflinching manner imaginable, much to the delight of the equally willing but less daring herd, who had suffered from the bully’s insolence.

‘You will join us, I am sure, Mr. Muller,’ repeated John-

stone. Muller's red face had paled and waned ; his eyes seemed retreating, ostrich-like, from sight, as if thereby to conceal their bulky owner. But, attention having been once drawn to him, escape was impossible.

'The very man !' exclaimed the Professor.

'He'll carry, surely,' sneered Corrigan.

And he of the skull, Ogrebabe, who had been absorbed in a hot, coppery sulk ever since the Professor had so innocently slighted his strength, burst out into an uncontrollable peal of laughter.

'Don't show the white feather, Muller,' deprecated Johnstone : 'you'll come ?'

In short, refusal was impossible ; and attempting to spread himself and regain his usual bullying bearing, but sufficiently betraying his inward feelings by an involuntary sigh, he followed his comrades into the sanctum of the Professor, in order to settle the plan of the campaign.

That was a matter speedily effected ; and the Professor promising to have his share of the arrangements completed and in readiness by eight o'clock, dismissed the adventurers to accomplish theirs.

Corrigan, for his part, sauntered back into the dissecting-room, muttering to himself 'the sack would be just the thing for his shoulders, and sure the boys would never forget a drop of the real.'

Big Muller swaggered home, rotating his cudgel vigorously, and alarmed the entire street by the thunder of his knock. In the space of ten minutes after obtaining entrance, he had contrived to turn the whole house topsy-turvy. The servant-maid was sent one way, the landlady's daughter another, her son a third, and herself every way ; while her other lodgers, each in his solitary chamber, roused from study, sat gaping, terrified at the import of the hitherto unprecedented hurly-burly, intimations of which, from time to time, not unintentionally reached their ears.

As for Johnstone and Ogrebabe, the former alleging that his apartments were nearest, and promising a sufficiency of all the needful stores and accoutrements, persuaded the latter to accompany him home.

By the way, Johnstone amused himself, as usual, at the

expense of his more susceptible companion. With his little *needy* laugh, and his two little eyes contracted to bodkins, he proceeded to re-open the wound which the Professor had so unwittingly inflicted, and in the most dexterous fashion insinuated that a deficiency of personal strength on the part of Ogrebabe was obvious to everybody. In short, for the greater part of the way, poor Ogrebabe, whose light and youthful figure really gave promise of all manliness, was kept wincing and flinching till the circumscribed giant within him, heaving in throes beneath a very Aetna of sensitive obstruction, had well nigh burst up and with preternatural vehemence overwhelmed the sneerer. Johnstone, however, contrived to put about just in the nick of time, and falling off in a pleasant breeze, laudatory of Ogrebabe's really fine chest, muscular arms, noble face, and generally hard frame, triumphantly carried him before the wind, with soothed feelings, homewards.

The storm still fitfully brawled, carrying the rain with it, as the old college clock struck eight. Corrigan, Johnstone, and Ogrebabe stood under the gateway execrating Muller, who had not yet arrived ; while Quasimodo, the porter, at the edge of the kerb-stone, held the little mare, not in the pleasantest humour. The seats of the vehicle being cushionless, however, ran no risk of soaking, so that the inconvenience of the position seemed limited to Quasimodo alone, whose garments the wind most vexatiously assaulted. As for the little mare, a short-backed, round-barrelled, well-armed, compact little creature, the very image of a trotter, she stood within the shafts with the most exemplary patience.

The carriage was a two-wheeled one, light but roomy ; in shape something like what are now denominated dog-carts, with seats for two in front, and the like accommodation behind, but so put that the occupiers of one department sat back to back with those of the other. Beneath the seats, there ran a cell, familiarly known as the crypt, capable of holding what may be supposed. At present, it contained a spade, a mattock, a small crowbar, and little *Fan's* feed bag.

Ogrebabe and Johnstone were well muffled up, and armed each with a flask of brandy and a stout stick. Corrigan too

could show a shillella, but the sacks necessary for the campaign were all he could boast of in the way of wrapper.

Occasionally, the little mare gave a stamp ; the wind a leap and a howl ; Quasimodo a clutch at his hat ; the trio an impatient exclamation : and thus they stood a full quarter of an hour before the heavy figure of Muller loomed in sight. ' Here he comes, at last,' exclaimed Johnstone, ' hang it ! Muller, where have you been ? ' But without waiting for his answer, the three sprang at once forward to the vehicle. Corrigan and Ogrebabe, as if by agreement, placed themselves in the rear, so that the vacant place by Johnstone, who was assuming the reins, was left for Muller.

' All right, Quasi ! let go ! ' and away down the street sprang the little mare. The wet pavements lay glittering beneath the lamplights. On trotted the little mare merrily, heedless of wind or rain. On, down Hill Street, round the corner, and away into Spine Street, with its long line of lamps tearfully stretching far into the night. On, away, street after street ; over the bridge with the swollen river roaring beneath. Down into the dark, narrow, tortuous suburbs. Out on the highway, and away bowling, till brought up by the rough *gur-gur, rick-ruck-rick* of some new-laid stones. Clear of that and away again, amid the howling wind, between hedges dimly seen, under trees struggling in the blast, and shaking their wet heads over the travellers. On past garden-walls, and mansion-gateways, and low cottages, and little victualler's shops just shutting. Away, past a yew-gloomed churchyard with upright gravestones, and a sulky square tower in the midst. Away, round turns, and over little bridges ; up hill and down hill ! Past collieries gleamed-on by romantic-looking fires ; the heavy beams above the pit showing spectral, and the clank of the machinery sounding *eerily !*

A heavy momentary shower falls, every now and then, from a gust of wind suddenly on the travellers ; but these showers get rarer and rarer ; and the dark blue sky with bright stars, occasionally looks out between clouds that drift swiftly over it. Far away, on the left, however, sits darkness round a hill, growling at intervals and lancing lightning angrily.

On runs the little mare, round a turn, down a hill, rattling over the stony street of a long village. Up again, out, and away, along the rim of a hill overhanging a deep ravine with picturesque lights far down in the bottom of it. On and on, into the realms of night, gathered fires, now and then, shooting up over the length and breadth of blank windows, up to the roof, suddenly as they pass. On, past the gaunt remains of a giant cotton mill, looking ghastly on them with its thousand vacant eyes, as they enter its shadow. On, round the base of a mountain. Swift, step, step, through a sleeping village that echoes on them. Out to, and along, the margin of a lake, its waters lashing the bank. Past the lake, on and up to a high table land, and away straight towards the sea.

The reader knows full well that our adventurers were not quite innocent, all this time, of the flasks. Corrigan, in particular, had paid considerable attention to a bottle of whisky of Muller's; and even the brandy of the other two had not been neglected.

The rain had now almost entirely gone off; but the sky, though bright with stars, was moonless, and, for the most part, shrouded with swiftly-drifting clouds. In spite of the storm, the travellers found themselves comparatively dry; and, on the whole, though more and more silent, they were in good heart for the weighty part of the enterprise, which was now approaching.

Every object began now to wear a familiar face to Ogrebabe. The trees rustled like acquaintances. Not a broken hedge, or stone-wall, or old post but seemed a friend to him. O! the exultation with which he had trod that footpath—the blow of triumph which, once in other days, his stick had inflicted, till it rung again, on that iron gate, when, with his feet, he had vanquished the barriers of space between him and *her*! Her? Ah! was not that the very bank whereon he had sat with her? was it not on that very spot that that so pleasant word had fallen—that that so innocent, betraying, little look had escaped?

On, on! not a stone but had its memories. And now what object had he? What was his errand now? So different! It made him shudder. No boundless exulta-

tion in his heart now! His face not now aflame with joy and eager expectation. His limbs not now firm with the triumph of a weary thirty miles conquered beneath them! Each well known object, as it glided towards him, remained not now behind but seemed to come with him, a weight. Ah, what heaviness lay upon his heart—pressing him twofold! The tears came like rivers down his cheeks—he could not stay them! There was the toll—the tree—the wall—the lane—ah me! the very garden! He shut his eyes—he would not look.

The stony street rattled now beneath the wheels. Every jolt struck upon his heart. Shut though his eyes were, not a house—not a turn—but was clear and visible to them! Quietly they passed along through the sleeping town—not one of all the four but breathed oppressedly in the silence.

They reached the bridge that over-arched the river, and halted there. Getting out, the carriage was led down the declivity by the side of the bridge to the river. The tide was up, and the stream was flooded by the rain, so that they could not go under the first arch of the bridge, as had been previously intended.

Leaving Muller and Johnstone for the present with the gig, Ogrebabe and Corrigan, with the implements on their shoulders, set out now for the churchyard, which sat on an eminence above the river with its tall spire shooting up into the night.

Stumbling along over rough stones and among wet grass, our two adventurers soon began cautiously to ascend, and speedily reached that corner of the wall near which the subject was represented to be buried. It was not without disappointment, although they had been led to expect no better, that the first object that met their eyes, as they looked over the low wall, was a sufficient watchman's box, lighted, and within twenty paces of the tree at the foot of which lay the grave in question.

The door was shut, however, and the little window looked but dim and harmless. Without hesitation, Corrigan threw himself over the fence, took the tools from Ogrebabe, and, bidding him hasten back for Muller, crept towards the grave and set to work. A huge tombstone lay upon the grave, and

seemed to be an effectual barrier to all profanation. A stranger over-looking the scene, would have chuckled to himself, and fancied Corrigan fairly foiled. Corrigan was too old a hand to be so easily dispirited ; and, stepping one pace back from the head of the grave, he commenced to scoop out a small opening, certainly less than two feet square. As he dug further and further, the passage began to slant slightly in the direction of the head of the coffin, the exact depth of which the Professor had been made aware of.

Leaving Corrigan digging away nothing daunted, almost in the very glimmer of the dim little window of the watch-box, let us follow OGREBABA. He had advanced to the brow of the declivity, and was on the point of descending, when he suddenly paused ; then, after a moment's hesitation, he turned abruptly along the wall in the direction of the town, muttering to himself, ' I will see the window ! '

Reaching the old familiar streets, swiftly he sped through them ; and soon, with palpitating heart, drew near the well-known dwelling. He stood by it. This was Erfine ; and he was here on such an errand ! All seemed to swim around him—the houses to topple and nod rebukingly over him. He tried a gate—it was barred and locked. Without a moment's thought he quitted it, ran along the street, up another, climbed a wall, crossed a garden, scrambled over a fence, and, slipping noiselessly along, speedily stood by a glazed door. The latch was in his hand—the latch so often lifted ; every ring and turn, and knob and accidental chip on which were so familiar to him. He lifted it, and pressed, but there was no entrance. ' I will knock,' thought he. ' St ! what nonsense ! What am I about ? ' He turned away and stood beneath a window—*her* window. He reached the sill, and attempted to look through. In vain ! the shutters were all closed ; no chink, no cranny could he find. He turned away in tears.

Slowly he retraced his steps ; but, regaining his buoyancy, he cried gaily, as he sprang over the wall, ' Good bye ! old garden ; Christmas is near—soon shall I see your old face again.' So, with lightened heart and quick steps, he made for the bridge.

Reaching his companions, and arranging with Johnstone to bring up the gig the moment he heard a whistle, and have it directed so that, in the event of an alarm, they might dash over the bridge and return by another though considerably longer route—to return the way they came would be easy if there were no alarm—he bade Muller follow him to the assistance of Corrigan.

Johnstone was now left alone, and in a position that certainly well merited the Scotch appellation *eerie*. While Muller was with him he had been comparatively comfortable : nay, as usual, he had contrived to gain amusement from him by playing on his fears ; keeping up a constant series of abrupt questions, as, ‘Was that a voice ? Do you see that man, Muller ?’ and more of a like sort. Now, however, alone, in the dark, in a strange place, on such an errand, without one friendly sound but that of the little mare munching in her seed-bag—the case was widely different, and, in spite of his firmness, Johnstone felt himself miserably trepidated. The wind wailed in the arches of the bridge most pitifully ; some trees rustled not far off quite disagreeably : then there was the gurgle and the rush of the river, and the hoarse roar of the not distant sea advancing ever and anon, like a legion of enemies. Altogether, Johnstone felt very queer ; but he kept his place steadily till—but let us rejoin the others.

Corrigan, whom they found on the outside of the wall, and not on the inside, where he had been left, received Ogrebabe and Muller with a pretty decided imprecation on their slowness, to which Ogrebabe thought best to make no reply ; but asked him how he got on. ‘On ! I might have had the divil in the poke by this time, but the dirty fellow, the watchman, has been bothering and putting me out entirely. The spade clinked on a bothering bit of stone ; and what does the fool do but put his ugly face out. Faith ! I thought he had twigged me, for he levelled his gun, but never a bit did I budge, and he dropped it again. He’s in a trifle of fear himself, for he would not leave his box though he had his wife at the back of him.’

‘His wife ?’ said Ogrebabe.

‘Ay, a woman that took him up a drop of something ; but

I believe she's going by this time—so, Muller, if you please, just give me that glazed hat and that pea-jacket of yours, and you take these, if you please. I have a trick in my head worth two of the dirty watchman's.'

Muller made the exchange without a word of contradiction; and Corrigan, while equipping himself, proceeded to say, 'There is no use going on with the job, you see, for the fellow's ears are open—but you step in, do you hear, and finish it, when you see me take off his attention.'

Corrigan was soon out of sight; and Ogrebabe and Muller stood looking over the wall, under the branches of the tree, wondering in what manner their comrade would accomplish his purpose. They had not stood long when, the watch-box opening, a woman stepped out with some empty dishes in her hand; and, bidding the occupant good night, departed into the darkness towards the gate of the churchyard. Presently, she came running back, however, screaming at the pitch of her voice, pursued, to the consternation of both Muller and Ogrebabe, by a drunken sailor; who, cursing his eyes, swore loudly he would see what the wench was about at such a time of night. The woman flew into the box trembling like a bird, while her husband, trembling quite as much as his helpmate, took up his weapon and stood in the door-way. 'The top of the morning to you, my boy!' shouted the sailor—and it was much to the relief of Ogrebabe and Muller, who had forgot the nature of the habiliments the latter had just parted with, that, in the tipsy tar, they recognised—Corrigan——'the top of the morning to you! and this is it—is it? by my sowl! and it is watching you are—and this is the Missis—is it? Well, no harm done! Just steering home, do you see?—too much stingo aboard—lost bearings—sails of your good woman hove in sight—afraid of nothing above or below, gave chase to the old lass, do you see? and here I am and no harm done.' The watchman growled—such a growl as made one understand that from the collapse of apprehension he had stiffened himself gradually up to the dignity of his office, and said, 'Well, go you back the way you came, my man,—the sooner you find yourself between the sheets the better for you, I guess.' 'By Jappers! my boy,' responded Corrigan, 'I'm not off so soon.

There's a bit of a fire—here's a drop of the right stuff—I say, old lass, just try a smell of it to take the fright out of you ;' and entering boldly within the watch-box, he proffered Muller's whisky bottle to the half-reassured female.

O gallant, brave John Barleycorn ! In five minutes the three, with sparkling eyes and smiling mouths, got quite happy together ; the daring Irishman keeping up the character of a sailor, in the main, sufficiently well. The door of the box remained open, however, and Muller and OGREBABA found it impossible to proceed to the work.

By and by, the woman taking her departure, CORRIGAN, in tipsy gallantry, offered to accompany her, but was forcibly detained by the husband, who, shutting the door, set CORRIGAN down by the fire, saying that 'his bottle was too good to lose yet.'

Ogrebabe and Muller now leaped over the wall, and proceeded to accomplish what CORRIGAN had so manfully begun. They found, indeed, that he had made wonderful progress ; and was already four feet beneath the surface. Taking it by spells, the two were soon far on in the work. The laughter of the watchman and the loud tones of CORRIGAN, ever and anon reaching their ears, infused courage and confidence into them.

Almost exhausted with fatigue, and sweating at every pore, at length they found their task just on the point of accomplishment. The unfortunate corpse was safely stowed away in the sack, and lay on the outside of the wall. Muller, who had been assisting OGREBABA to effect this, had just stepped back in order to fill in the earth and leave all apparently as it had been before. Somehow, however, he missed his footing, reeled, stumbled, and fell into the opening, sliding down to the very bottom till his feet struck and sounded loudly against the empty coffin. CORRIGAN and the watchman who, drinking, talking, and laughing, had both failed to hear many little sounds which silence might have betrayed, both started up with affright, though for very different reasons. The Irishman had presence of mind enough, however, to be the first to seize the musket ; and, standing in the doorway, he prevented the poor watchman from having a single glimpse. Looking to the grave, he

could see Muller scrambling out of the hole, and having succeeded in that, to the dismay of the Irishman, throwing himself over the wall in the wildest fashion imaginable, displacing the very stones of it till they rolled down noisily.

‘D—— the fools ! they’re off—good night, mister—sorry to part,’ exclaimed Corrigan ; and flinging the musket rattling far among the tombstones, he vaulted over the wall, and disappeared after his companions.

The throwing of the gun was a blunder, however, for it went off with a loud report in the stillness of the night ; and the astonished watchman, at length comprehending the trick, rushed out towards the houses, shouting at the very pitch of his voice. Muller, in clearing the wall, would have at once bounded down the slope and left the subject to its fate ; but Ogrebabe, seizing him, compelled him to take a hold, and the two together, in spite of their burthen, ran down on the wings of the wind towards the bridge. Corrigan soon gained on them, however ; and Muller hearing his steps and fancying him some pursuer, let go his hold of the corpse and ran off frantic with panic. With an imprecation on his cowardice, Corrigan caught the burthen just as it was falling, and bearing more than half the weight of it, he, with Ogrebabe, soon reached the carriage.

Johnstone, apprised of their approach, and that something was wrong by the manner of it, had the vehicle in readiness, head to the bridge. Muller was in vain urging him to drive off, assuring him that both Corrigan and Ogrebabe had certainly been caught. Up came the two panting, and, quick as lightning, thrust the subject into the crypt ; then, leaping to their seats, gave the word to Johnstone to drive for very life.

By this time, the alarm had become general ; the church bells were ringing tumultuously ; and there was shouting sufficient almost to awaken the dead.

Over the bridge sprang willingly the little mare, and round a corner into a long row of houses. On through the row at the top of her speed she dashed, passing here and there some half-naked householder standing bewildered by his door. To their horror, just as they cleared the row, they came suddenly on a toll-bar. Swift as thought, Corrigan

sprang out to open it, but, the toll-man, issuing in his shirt at the same moment, grappled with him. The shouts behind them waxed louder and louder. Muller sat incapable; but OGREBABA had leaped to the rescue of CORRIGAN; and JOHNSTONE having thrust the reins into Muller's helpless fingers, had also leaped out and was doing his best to unfasten the gate.

Down fell the toll-keeper senseless on the ground; the gate swung open; our adventurers rushed to their places—just as the rabble came upon them; and CORRIGAN, with a blow of his cudgel, levelling the foremost of them, who had laid a sacrilegious hand on the rim of the carriage, away sprang the little mare amid the disappointed howl of her pursuers. On they drove at full gallop, the shouts of the townsmen falling fainter and fainter behind them. 'Hurra, hurra, hurra!' shouted CORRIGAN. 'Go it, my cripples! bowl along, my darlings—all right again for ye!' And along a fine level road skirting the sea they bowled away rarely. 'Hush! Is that a horse behind us?' said JOHNSTONE. What silence for a moment! 'By Jin, we're done for after all!' exclaimed CORRIGAN. 'Push on—push on—don't stop!' cried OGREBABA. There are two roads on a bit—we take the long one—they are likeliest to take the short one!

On they drove, listening most anxiously. Presently they passed the meeting of the two roads; and taking the right-hand one, they kept still along the sea, whose roar almost intercepted the sound of their wheels. Driving at a somewhat gentler pace, they still listened with all their ears. The pursuing hoofs, which were now heard more and more distinctly, ceased suddenly to sound. They had paused by the parting of the roads. It was a moment's pause; and instantly they were heard behind them again. Muller groaned, and, rising from his seat, seemed half inclined to seek refuge in a flight across the fields. CORRIGAN, imprecating a series of the most horrible curses, ended with, 'We'll be sent over the water, by G—.' 'No, hang it! let's try again!' whispered OGREBABA, with a peculiar tone. 'There's but one horse behind us, and surely we can manage one fellow. Halt, JOHNSTONE, never fear! let the mare

breathe a bit ! Now, Muller ; now, if there is any pluck in you !' Johnstone had pulled up, and Ogrebabe and Corrigan, followed by the reluctant Muller, advanced along the road towards the approaching horseman. In brief words Ogrebabe explained his intention ; and Corrigan had only time to mutter, 'Good, by J— !' ere the rider came upon them. Seeing the three, he pulled in, and asked hurriedly 'had they met a gig ?' 'A gig ! no ; but there's a carrier's cart gone by !' 'The rascals have gone the other way, then,' cried the rider ; and turning his steed hastily, he was just riding off when, to the dismay of our adventurers, the little mare suddenly neighed loud, long, and unmistakeably. The horseman, while his steed was just returning a friendly answer, paused, apparently scenting the ruse ; but Ogrebabe, stepping forward, drew him suddenly to the ground. Corrigan and Muller secured him, while Ogrebabe, to whom the approach of other horses was now too evident, seized the bridle of the masterless steed, leaped into the saddle, and dashed forward to meet the new-comers. Shouting out 'The other way, the other way ! the rascals have gone the other way,' he galloped into the teeth and right through the midst of them. The party halted ; but on drove Ogrebabe as hard as his horse could carry him—on through an indiscriminate rabble on foot, still shouting out, 'The other way, the other way !' On he dashed—on to the turn and up the other road at swiftest speed. Then presently drawing bridle, and satisfied that the whole rout followed him, he vaulted from the saddle, gave the horse a blow that sent him galloping wildly up the road, leaped the fence, ran through the wood that covered the angle between the two roads, and presently bounded out at the side of his companions. In half a minute the four were off again at full trot, leaving the unfortunate wight, whose horse had been so serviceable to Ogrebabe, bound hand and foot, and his mouth gagged, by the side of the road.

Leaving them to pursue their further journey amid exulting libations of brandy from the flask till every one of them, except the driver, had taken at least too much, we shall revert to the dissecting room.

It was five in the morning ; and some dozen of the more

enthusiastic students were assembled there, anxious for the return of our adventurers. The fire was but green, and the leaden floor was miserably cold ; not a few feet were stamping ; not a few teeth were chattering. An oil lamp standing on a table, not far from the fire, lit the room but dimly ; and the buzzing, spitting blazes of the black, kindling coals, looked but comfortless.

Our old friend, the plodder, with his hands in his pockets, still sniffing at the water-drop on his red nose, kept wandering about the room, peering at this and the other anatomical knick-knack. Quasimodo, having done his best by the fire, began his never-failing story of how he had entered the Ram's Horn churchyard—dug up a handsome man—clad him in an old greatcoat and a pair of shoes of his own, with a broken-down hat—and carried him home in the character of a drunk friend—triumphantly—all by himself.

Quasi croaked on at his story ; the black coals exploded and simmered ; and the plodder wandered about, pausing occasionally, however, to look over the heads of the group round Quasi, and listen a moment, his two little eyes twinkling a most simply guileless, innocent smile, the while.

So wore the time away, till at length the sound of wheels was heard down the court. 'There they are' ! and away sprang Quasi, with the agility of a rhinoceros, to give his assistance. Presently, in rolled our adventurers, exulting, flushed in the face, and not without an occasional lurch in their gait. Quasi followed them bearing the sack, which he deposited on the empty table with the lamp on it. All crowded round to see the interesting process of unsacking.

'Here's a set of fools !' roared Quasi, as he pulled the sack off, and the feet of the subject protruded through the mouth of it. 'Here's a set of fools ! they've brought the clothes with them.' 'The devil !' exclaimed Corrigan. 'That's not my fault anyways—but what matter ? we may be just as well taken up for robbery as for murder, for we have had a devil of a shindy.'

'Clothes—clothes ! what about the clothes ?' stuttered Ogrebabe, on whom the adventure, if not the libations, had taken very decided effect—'Clothes,' he stuttered out,

approaching the foot of the table where the white wrappages of the lower half of the body, freed from the sack, now shone in sight—'What's the use of clothes in a dissecting-room, I should like to know?—No modesty here, by *Juno*—Come, old lass, let's see your lily-white ankles!' and with both hands he took hold of the bottom of the dress, as if he would tear it up. But just as he did this, Quasimodo, disengaging the sack from the rest of the corpse, disclosed the mild, meek features of a most lovely, fair-haired girl. All eyes were riveted on the face; and every heart was hushed; till from Ogrebabe's deepest bosom burst, in a long, wild cry, the name of Helen! An avalanche seemed fallen—a thunderbolt—but Corrigan, more than half tipsy, exclaiming, 'You know her—do you? Shan't know her long, by——,' snatched up a cleaver with the evident intention of—what was not uncommon in those days of inaccessible subjects—disfiguring the corpse. A low, husky whisper thrilled through the room—'Corrigan, I will kill you if you strike;' and the arm of the ruffian was clutched by Ogrebabe. The Irishman, however, with a contemptuous look, half shook the stripling off, and aimed a blow at the cold, angelic countenance. The blow fell short, and only smote the lamp from the table, leaving the room in darkness. There was a shriek—there was the silence of death! The moon, gleaming suddenly through the skylight, left a smile on the pale meek face of the corpse; and showed Corrigan unsteadily leaning against the wall, and holding on by the edge of the table. A swift drip, drip, drip was pattering on the leaden floor; and there, in the moonlight, liquidly widening itself, lay a pool of blood. An indescribable groan broke from the hearts of all. A cloud snatched the light away. A shuffle was heard—then the closing of the outer door. 'He's off,' cried Johnstone, rushing to the door, followed by most of them. Down the stair—down the courts—into the street—they ran. A dark object carrying something white, was seen speeding with swift but uncertain steps at a distance before them. Presently, it was seen to stumble—to fall—then a wild cry pierced the darkness. 'Ha! Helen, Helen! He tore your smock, did he?—he tore your smock, but he has it, the villain—he has it!' Johnstone and his com-

panions reached the spot. It was OGREBABA with his dead and desecrated Helen.

The noise that these events excited, and the legal proceedings consequent upon them, can easily be conceived, and need not be detailed. CORRIGAN recovered from his wound, and went to practise in the West Indies. MULLER, as big and blatant as ever, but with the virtue of sobriety, is a country practitioner. JOHNSTONE is one of our most skilful practical surgeons, a professor at a university, and a lecturer in an hospital. As for poor OGREBABA,—what better could there be for him?—he died, in the delirium of fever, murmuring ‘Helen!’*

‘I AM THAT I AM:’†

AN INTERPRETATION AND A SUMMARY.

By J. H. S.

I NEVER was, nor will be, but I am ;
 And all that was, or will be, is but Me.
 Here is the mystery, and here the veil
 That never was by mortal man upraised.
 Hearken !—*There is*, and *that* there is, is but
 The one necessity, th’ eternal *must* :
 Matter that, starved into itself, is form,
 And form that, struck, even as a crystal struck,
 Is matter. Scattered so, the grains are black
 And many, but the diamond is one
 Diaphanous. Transparent or opaque

* It may appear impossible, nowadays, that OGREBABA should not have heard of the death of Helen ; but in days before the present postage system, people of the class indicated rarely wrote letters or received any. People, there and then, only trusted to see each other, after months it might be. All objections, however, must yield to facts ; and it is a fact, that such young gentleman saw—to his horror, and with change of his whole life—such young lady so brought in for dissection.

† From *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, for October 1877.

The spicula, according to its turn.
Circumference and centre are but one.
What is, must belly into sense, or be
Blank nothing. Webs are but the one of one
In cross, and difference is identity.
I see myself into the universe
Eclipsing into me. Within myself
I am the rich solution of myself,
Solvent and solvend both. Yea, I am one ;
But my own ratio fills me, which, discerned
Apart from me, is no more me, but mine—
The world !—even externality in play.
One absolute proportion is the whole,
One sole relation, whose correlatives
Are at once the multitudinous vast
And unity,—finite and infinite,—
Matter and mind,—the creature and its God.
My *act* is *object*, as the shadow held
In pulsing of my wheels invisible.
From nought to nought of two eternities,
Springs the gross waterfall, strong, compact, huge,
But still is not, the moment that it is :
I am, I *am*, and I am that I am.
And you that come, you have my riches all
In fee. But externality is blind,
Lawless in law. Be thou but me, and then
The steps are but the steps, slipp'ry themselves
And in themselves of no account. Enjoy
Thou me, and let my will be thine alone :
The one is many, and the many one.
Herein is peace divine and the great life
That is the all—— : Shakespeare and Socrates,
And poets old, prophets and saintly priests,
The woods, the sea, the glory of the stars,
Man and the life of man, in streets, in fields,
Children and the woman by the hearth—Love !
Nor doubt but He, Jesus of Nazareth,
Will make thee sweet in life, and in death mine.
Come thou to me through Him ! come thou in prayer—
Come, when thy heart is weak and fails thee, Come !

Brute is the world in externality,
And blind, still stumbling in contingency ;
But I, even I, am Lord : I will control
The monstrous masses as they wheel, and check
Them there, and smooth the pillow for thy head,—
Make thou thyself but mine—but me—in Prayer !



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